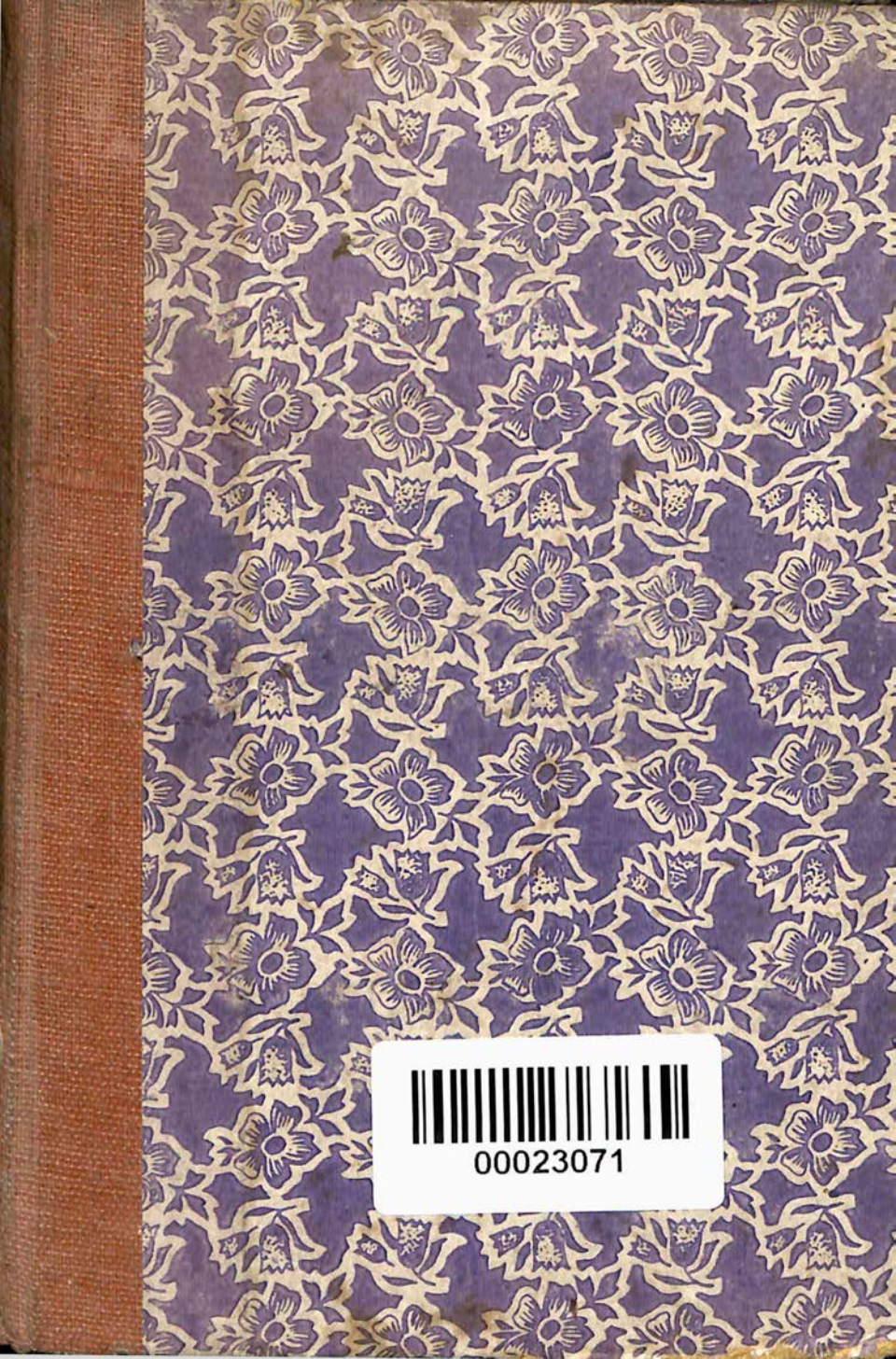
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MEMORIALS OF THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF CHARLES CALDER MACKINTOSH, D.D.

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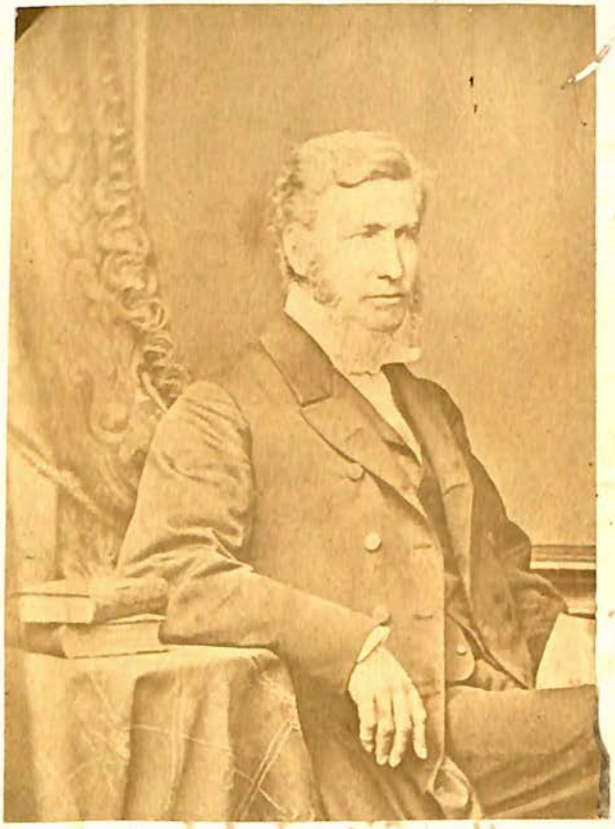

Yours most faithfully
Chas. C. Mackintosh

MEMORIALS

OF

THE LIFE AND MINISTRY

OF

CHARLES CALDER MACKINTOSH, D.D.

OF TAIN AND DUNOON

EDITED

WITH A SKETCH OF THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE NORTHERN HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND

BY THE REV. WILLIAM TAYLOR, M.A.

STIRLING

EDINBURGH
EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS
1870.

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PREFATORY NOTICE.

ALTHOUGH Dr. Mackintosh generally preached without manuscript, no man more dreaded to utter in the pulpit words "unadvisedly with his lips." His discourses were not only studied with conscientious care, but for the most part, unless when the multiplicity of labours made this impossible, written fully out. Accordingly he has left many valuable manuscript remains, from which the following Sermons are in the meanwhile selected. The difficulty was to choose amid so much that was admirable and useful.

The Sermons now published are given, it will be seen, in systematic, not in chronological order. Nor can a complete chronological arrangement of them well be made; inasmuch as a good many have two dates, having been first written in the beginning or middle period of the author's ministry, and re-written with more or fewer changes in his later years. To this class belong the Sermons here numbered V. VI. VII. XVII. XIX. perhaps also XXI. and, we may add, though in these the changes were very slight, XII. and XIII. It will, however, be interesting to some readers to know that the Sermons I. II. III. IV. XVI. and XXII. belong to the

early ministry ; VIII. IX. and XXI. to the middle; and X. XI. XIV. XV. XVIII. and XXIII. to the latest.

The historical portion of the Introductory Sketch is of such a nature that authorities could hardly be given for its statements without the appearance of pedantry. The condensed narrative and general view presented are based on a multitude of notes collected during many years, in part from books, but still more from local records, unpublished MSS., oral traditions, and personal observations in the very heart of the district to which it refers. Whensoever the extant materials for a more detailed religious history of the Northern Highlands come to be published, the editor ventures to think that the general correctness of his narrative and description will be substantiated.

With reference to the Biographical Sketch, his authorities for statements beyond, or confirmatory of, his own personal knowledge are in general sufficiently indicated in the narrative. He must, however, record in addition his special obligations to the Rev. Angus M. M'Gillivray, Dairsie, for access to letters and for personal reminiscences relating chiefly to Dr. Mackintosh's student years, which have been found very important in illustrating the circumstances of his first conversion and some parts also of his subsequent experience.

We may here supply an omitted date. Dr. Mackintosh received the degree of D.D. from a foreign university (Union College, in the State of New York) in the year 1850 ; at which time the Scottish Universities,

under the influence of ecclesiastical feeling, were persistently ignoring, as we are glad to say they do not now, the merits of the most distinguished divines in Scotland. It was virtually, however, a Scottish honour, having been bestowed in answer to a strong application, made wholly without his own knowledge, by the late Drs. Cunningham, Buchanan, Bannerman, and other equally eminent men still living.

The editor undertook his labours under a sense of great privilege and responsibility; and both feelings have been deepened in again finding himself brought into such close contact with this holy man of God. He desires to commend the volume to the blessing of Him on whose grace his revered pastor and friend so humbly depended, and to whose glory he strove so constantly to live.

STIRLING, *Dec. 1st*, 1870.

CONTENTS.

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR.

PAGE

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, ... 1

SKETCH OF THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE NORTHERN HIGHLANDS, ... 3

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, ... 28

SERMONS AND FRAGMENTS.

First Division.

GOD'S WONDROUS MERCY.

SERMON I.—GOD'S MERCY REAL AND INFINITE, . . 67

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."—ISA. LV. 8, 9.

SERMON II.—DIVINE MERCY ABUNDANTLY PARDONING, 76

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."—ISA. LV. 8, 9.

PAGE

SERMON III.—OBJECTS AND RECIPIENTS OF MERCY, . 87

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."—ISA. LV. 8, 9.

SERMON IV.—THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, . 95

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."—2 COR. VIII. 9.

SERMON V.—THE SUBSTITUTION AND RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST, ... 111

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."—2 COR. V. 21.

SERMON VI.—THE SAVIOUR'S COMPASSION, . . . 124

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."—LUKE XIX. 41, 42.

SERMON VII.—DIVINE LONG-SUFFERING, . . . 135

"He spake also this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard: and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he, answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."—LUKE XIII. 6-9.

FRAGMENT I.—THE PERSONAL MINISTRY OF CHRIST, . 146

FRAGMENT II.—THE MINISTRY OF ONE OF CHRIST'S SERVANTS, ... 149

Second Division.

THE GREAT CHANGE.

PAGE

SERMON VIII.—THE EXTINCTION OF THE OLD LIFE, . 155

"For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."—ROM. VII. 9.

SERMON IX.—THE NEW LIFE, ... 165

"I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God."—GAL. II. 19.

SERMON X.—THE CONVERSION OF THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA, ... 178

"Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"—JOHN IV. 29.

SERMON XI.—MANASSEH, ... 193

"Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign," etc.—2 CHRON. XXXIII. 1-20; 2 KINGS XXI. 1-18.

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope."—ROM. XV. 4.

SERMON XII.—HEAVEN'S JOY OVER THE PENITENT, . 205

"Likewise, I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."—LUKE XV. 10.

SERMON XIII.—"LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH," . . . 218

"Like precious faith."—2 PET. I. 1.

SERMON XIV.—PEACE WITH GOD, ... 232

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."—ROM. V. 1.

FRAGMENT III.—THE SINNER'S OBLIGATION TO HAVE A NEW HEART, ... 245

Third Division.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

PAGE

SERMON XV.—CHRIST'S EASY YOKE, ... 253

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."—MATT. XI. 30.

SERMON XVI.—"LOVEST THOU ME?" 265

"So, when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."—JOHN XXI. 15-17 (see also MARK XIV. 26-31, 66-72.)

SERMON XVII.—"ABIDE IN ME," 278

"Abide in me, and I in you."—JOHN XV. 4.

SERMON XVIII.—GOD DWELLING WITH THE CONTRITE, . 289

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."—ISA. LVII. 15.

SERMON XIX.—"GRIEVE NOT THE SPIRIT," 304

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."—EPH. IV. 30.

SERMON XX.—"FOLLOW HOLINESS," 319

"Follow . . . holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."—HEB. XII. 14.

PAGE

SERMON XXI.—"LOOKING UNTO JESUS," . . . 336

"Looking unto Jesus."—HEB. XII. 2.

SERMON XXII.—THROUGH THE WILDERNESS TO THE CITY, 351

"And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation."—Ps. CVII. 7.

Conclusion.

SERMON XXIII.—CHRIST "ALL, AND IN ALL," . . 371

"Where"—or in which thing—"there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."—COL. III. 11.

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION.

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION.

In prefixing a biographical sketch to some selected remains of the late Charles Calder Mackintosh, D.D., successively of Tain and of Dunoon, we introduce it with a condensed historical narrative of the religious history of the district of his birth and earlier ministry. For that history has been an interesting and peculiar one, and—while the intrinsic value of the remains fit them for extensive usefulness, and the rare beauty and impressiveness of their author's character make it right, in the judgment of all who knew him well, that its memory should be preserved and diffused—he was in important respects a representative man.

Much attention has been recently drawn to the Northern Highlands of Scotland by the remarkable fact that, at the disruption of the Scottish Church in 1843, the movement in that district took the form not of an ecclesiastical division as in other parts of the country, so much as of an exodus of almost the entire population out of their old and cherished ecclesiastical connection with the State. In their own phrase, "*the Church* came out." Now, if the question be asked, Who were the men who led that great movement in the Northern Highlands, and what was their personal character? we

answer, You have in the author of these sermons one of them, the influence of whose example, over a sphere far wider than his own humility ever allowed him to think, was among the very greatest. Or if asked, What was the religious teaching under which those people had been trained, and for the sake of which they so acted? we can still say, that these sermons present a pure specimen of it. We do not say an average specimen, for it was far above an average. Neither do we say a complete specimen; for Charles Mackintosh was one of several eminent men with great variety of gifts, who, while thoroughly at one in the substance of their preaching, contributed something special, each of them, to the pulpit power of the North. Let us, confining ourselves to some of his friends and fellow-workers now gone to their rest, name John M'Donald of Ferintosh, the man of popular eloquence, versatile powers, and genial Christian spirit, the theologian and evangelist of the Highlands; Alexander Stewart, of Cromarty, the man of original genius and sublime oratory; Donald Sage of Resolis, the textual preacher, whose penetrating, exact, yet spiritual expositions struck his hearers with all the effect of novelty, while securing their confidence as presenting the very mind of the Spirit; and Roderick M'Leod, the heroic confessor and apostle of the Isle of Skye. But there was no one of all these who was more closely connected with the religious life of the North by birth, ancestral ties, and historical surroundings than Dr. Charles Mackintosh, or in whose personal experience and preaching its piety found more beautiful development. He was, undoubtedly, influenced by the religious atmosphere which he breathed in his native district, though not by it alone; and he contri-

buted at an important epoch to influence it in return. To understand him fully, therefore, it is desirable, and to appreciate the power of his life and labours it is necessary, to make reference to the past religious history of the North.

I.—SKETCH OF THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE NORTHERN HIGHLANDS.

One of the most striking features in the configuration of Scotland is the great triangular gulf, sometimes inaccurately designated in its whole extent the Moray Firth, of which the base line stretches over sea from Caithness to Aberdeenshire, and whose apex or inner point falls not far from the town of Inverness. Near this apex the waters of the great basin penetrate inland in the form of three arms,—the Beauly or Moray Firth (strictly so called), the Cromarty or Conon Firth, and the Dornoch or Oykle Firth, to which may be added, a few miles farther north, the smaller inlet of Little Ferry or Loch Fleet. It is to the semi-lowland district lying along and between these lovely arms of the sea, and to the river valleys which radiate from them inwards, and lose themselves in the lofty Highlands behind, that we wish to direct special attention. Not only is this region distinguished from the greater part of the Highlands by its physical character and its exceptional fertility; it has been distinguished historically by its much earlier intercourse and sympathy with the South, its general loyalty to the old Scottish kings against the pretensions of the Lords of the Isles, and in more recent times to the Orange and Hanoverian Governments against the pretensions of the Stuarts; while, religiously and ecclesiastically, it has been distinguished

by the earlier prevalence in it of a decided Presbyterian and evangelical religion, which from it mainly has gradually spread into the whole Northern Highlands.

The ancient Scottish kings were at times attracted to this region; they made Inverness their northern seat of justice, and they made some attempts to replace the Celtic population of the district with colonies of Germanic origin, as they had effectually done in the lowlands of Morayshire. They succeeded only in planting on the coast one or two fishing villages, which to this day are occupied by a non-Celtic race, speaking a peculiar dialect. Yet the frequent intercourse with the Lowlands gave to the whole district of the northern Firths a bi-lingual character, which has enabled it, from very early times, to follow the South at no distant interval in the path of civilisation.

There was at the same time another influence at work, of which Tain, a small town picturesquely situated on the southern shore of the Dornoch Firth, was the centre, and to which may not improbably be traced back much of the religious earnestness of the district. In the eleventh century, that place gave birth to a man (Duthach by name) who is recorded in Irish annals to have been the "chief confessor of Ireland and Scotland," and whose reputation for learning and holiness made his shrine, for nearly five centuries, a resort for pilgrims, and his native town a refuge for fugitives from all parts of Scotland. The kings themselves were among the pilgrims; and one of them, James IV., visited St. Duthach's so often, that an English poem, written after his fall at Flodden, taunts the Scots with their devotion to "Doffin their demi-god of Ross." Mistaken devotion is often more hopeful than indifference; and so it is

remarkable that the town which, as the centre of this superstition, was brought into such close connection with the religion of the times, was, as far as has been traced, the very first to the north of the Grampians that cordially embraced the doctrines of the Reformation. Amid the silence of history as to any interest taken by the Highlanders in general in that great evangelical movement of the sixteenth century, it is almost startling to learn that the "good Regent" Moray presented the people of the remote northern burgh of Tain with a handsome oaken pulpit in testimony of their zeal in the cause of the Reformation.[1] The inference naturally suggests itself, that there must have been a genuine reformation, a real work of grace, to stir up the population to this public zeal against the superstitions that had given celebrity to their town, and that had doubtless brought its inhabitants much worldly gain.

Local tradition mentions that, in the church of St. Duthach, there was at that time chained a large oak-bound Bible, which was read aloud every working-day between twelve and four o'clock, for the sake of persons who came in from the country to do business. Thus the truth spread in the adjoining parts of Ross and Sutherland. At least one of the great neighbouring chiefs, Munro of Foulis, had taken his stand also from the first as an earnest Protestant, and his local influence was very great. His family furnished a remarkable number of zealous Protestant ministers and laymen. One of these was

[1] Local tradition in preserving this fact adds that the pulpit was of French manufacture. Its oaken framework may still be seen in the old church of St. Duthach, and many persons in that neighbourhood remember it in its nearly perfect state; but after the building was vacated, half a century ago, boys and visitors robbed it of its ornamental carved work.

Commissioner for the settlement of churches in Ross, and is described by George Buchanan as a pious and learned man. Another of the earliest of them, John Munro, minister of Tain, stands out in relief in the history of the Church of Scotland. When King James VI. succeeded to the throne of England, he immediately attempted to effect a complete union between his two kingdoms and their two churches. Resolving for this end to conform the Scottish Church to the English, and fearing lest her General Assembly might thwart his scheme, he interdicted its meeting; thereby violating, as her most eminent sons were persuaded, two principles at once,—the religious principle of the Church's right and obligation to meet in name of her Divine Head, whether in congregations or in General Assembly, for the performance of every duty which He has imposed on her; and the constitutional principle of the King's incompetency to forbid the meeting of a General Assembly summoned in accordance with laws ratified by himself. Doubtless these principles, in their practical application, involved difficulties which may have perplexed even enlightened and honest men, or made them think the time inopportune for the practical assertion of them; the more remarkable therefore was the boldness of the few presbyteries who deputed commissioners to that interdicted Assembly, and of the nineteen ministers—one of them the celebrated John Welch, of Ayr, in the far south, another, John Munro, of Tain, in the far north—who, in spite of the interdict and of tempestuous weather, actually met at Aberdeen, and constituted the Assembly in the name of Christ. The King called it a "seditious Assembly;" he imprisoned and banished

its leading members, until some of them were wearied into acquiescence, and others, after prolonged sufferings, died in prison or exile.[1] Arbitrary authority and an Erastian Episcopacy triumphed: but the great principles that had been raised into prominence by the Aberdeen Assembly did not die; they only slept for a generation, to revive in 1638 with a power that shook the throne of both the kingdoms.

For the religion of the Northern Highlands, the year (1605) of the Aberdeen Assembly was otherwise a very important one, for in it a signal benefit was granted to the town and neighbourhood of Inverness. We know of no facts to indicate that there the Reformation had previously been much more than an external movement; but at this date God sent to sojourn in it for seven years, and after an interval for two years more, the celebrated Robert Bruce of Kinnaird, minister at Edinburgh, one of the most devoted and honoured servants of Christ that Scotland has known. Though not a member of the Aberdeen Assembly, he was persecuted by the King for his unflinching practical maintenance of the same principles. The King meant it for evil when banishing him to Inverness—"I will

[1] We have been unable to trace the minister of Tain's career clearly to the end, though he was probably a man of mark, as he was one of three put in nomination for the Moderatorship of the Aberdeen Assembly. It is certain that, after a year's imprisonment in the Castle of Doune, in Perthshire, he escaped, made his way home, and ministered to his people without legal stipend for four years, until 1610, when the Privy Council, by the King's instruction, peremptorily ordered the magistrates of the burgh to imprison him. It was about this year that the whole Church became passive for a time. A John Munro, Sub-Dean of Ross, is stated to have died at Tain in 1615. Yet the commonness of the name in Ross-shire, together with the fact that several contemporary ministers bore it, may warrant a doubt whether he was not a different man.

have no more Popish pilgrimages to Kinnaird," he said —but God meant it for incalculable good. Bruce had striven by supplication to the King to have his sentence of banishment commuted; his sojourn at Inverness was amid grievous hardships of many kinds; though afflicted with severe bodily ailments, he could not obtain a house even for money; the minister and magistrates, with other powerful persons, combined to persecute him; once he was shot at on the street; so that many a time he longed and strove hard to be allowed to leave it. But comfort and God's blessing by no means always go together in the ministerial work. "That poor dark country," wrote Robert Fleming towards the end of the same century, "was marvellously enlightened; many were brought to Christ by his ministry, and a seed sown in those places which to this day is not worn out." Not only from Inverness and the country lying on the south side of the Moray Firth, but (according to a tradition still extant) from Ross and Sutherlandshire across several ferries, earnest persons used to come Sabbath after Sabbath, on what was no vain "Popish pilgrimage," to attend his conscience-searching and soul-saving ministrations. The bi-lingual character of much of the district accounts for the resort of Highlanders to the teaching of a man who was probably ignorant of Gaelic; and we can understand that from among such converts and their families would come subsequently some of the well-qualified Gaelic-English ministers, through whom the divine seed was propagated among the purely Gaelic people to after generations.

Another historical event is said to have contributed to the extension and deepening of vital godliness in

the district of the Firths and also farther north. When Gustavus Adolphus in 1630 entered Germany to aid the Protestants there in their fearful struggle for toleration, his army was accompanied out of Sweden by one regiment of foreigners, a Scottish one, under the command of Lord Reay, the chief of the clan M'Kay in the north of Sutherland.[1] This regiment was subsequently joined by a second one under the command of Munro, Baron of Foulis. They were composed of young adventurers from all parts of Scotland, but chiefly from Mackay's and Munro's own clans, along also with the clans Ross and Sutherland,—that is to say, of gentry and people from the north and east of Sutherland-shire and the eastern part of Ross-shire. In the army of Gustavus these soldiers appear to have come into contact with much earnest piety; and when the survivors returned home, it was not only with intensified Protestant zeal, but in many instances with hearts deeply touched by the grace of God. Thus they brought an important accession of strength and depth to the religion of the North, and contributed to give it a firm footing among the general population. We have been told that a Swedish clergyman who visited Scotland not many years ago, after listening to some specimens of the unique Gaelic psalmody which is used nowhere but in this part of the Highlands, claimed for it a Swedish origin. If this claim was well founded, it accords with what has just been said; for never assuredly did music more truly express a sentiment of the heart than do these wild melodies, with their prolonged and swelling cadences, so plaintive and meditative, yet, when heard in the great open-air congregations, so

[1] Geijer's *History of the Swedes* (London translation), p. 231.

sublime, represent the very tone and character of the religion of the district.

Such, as far as known to us, were the circumstances attendant on the first planting of evangelical religion in the northern Highlands. A broad belt of unreformed Popery, or of generally dead Protestantism—extending over Aberdeen, Banff, the greater part of Moray, and the whole south and west of Inverness-shire—separated it from those southern districts of Scotland where evangelical religion also prevailed. Neither had it at that time extended into Wester Ross, or the south-west of Sutherland, and hardly into the county of Caithness. The district of the northern Firths, in its religious isolation, was thus like an oasis in the midst of a desert.

We must hasten over a few principal facts of its subsequent religious history. It appears to have participated in an effusion of the Spirit of grace which in many parts of Scotland followed the recovery of religious freedom in 1638; and thereafter, during the persecutions that disgraced the reigns of Charles II. and James II., it shared in the sufferings for Christ's cause, and furnished some noble witnesses for the truth. A small band of devoted ministers in the North preferred deprivation of their livings and banishment from their parishes to a polluted conscience; and then continued, as poor and sometimes homeless wanderers, to preach Christ's gospel in other places, at the risk and in several cases with the actual result of long imprisonment and of exile. But the feeling of the district was with them (assuredly it was not from the people of this quarter that the savage "Highland host" was drawn which the tyrannical Government of that day employed to hunt

down the Covenanters of the South; this was itself a covenanting, though, from its remoteness, not equally suffering district); and accordingly they found, among the pious gentry and others, protectors who, at great personal risk, and with great pecuniary loss, saved them many times from their pursuers. Pre-eminent among these protectors of the persecuted saints we may name two in Ross-shire, Munro of Foulis, and Ross of Balnagown, with his devotedly pious wife, Lady Anne Stewart. The almost regal power of the great Presbyterian chiefs of Sutherlandshire may have been the reason why active persecution seems hardly to have entered that county at all, so that it is said to have furnished homes to many refugees from Ross-shire.

The most eminent of those outed ministers of the North who scattered the word of life in previously dark places was Thomas Hog, that "great and almost apostolical servant of Christ,"[1] whose holy life so shut the mouths of the bitterest enemies of the cause for which he suffered, that they could find no fault in him at all except as touching the law of his God. He was a native of Tain, and minister of Kiltearn near Dingwall. Ejected thence by faithless brethren after a brief but richly-blessed ministry, he obtained many souls for his Master in other places, especially in Morayshire. Among the persons of note in that county who protected him and other "intercommuned" ministers may be named, as an ancestor of the principal subject of our sketch, Mrs. Lilias Campbell, by birth Dunbar, a lady of eminent piety and heroic spirit, who suffered imprisonment and many other hardships for her steadfast adherence to Christ's persecuted cause. After various

[1] Wodrow.

wanderings and imprisonment, Hog was banished to Holland. At the Revolution he returned to his parish, to form, with a few surviving brethren from "the years before the flood," the nucleus of the restored Presbyterian and evangelical Church of the North. King William, who had conceived a high esteem for him in Holland, and who had there consulted him on Scottish affairs, insisted on his removal to London to become one of his chaplains; the patent was actually issued; but the summons of a greater King forestalled the change, by removing him from earth to heaven. His parish, with the district around it (known as Ferindonald), produced such a number and such a succession of devoted Christians, that it came to be familiarly spoken of among pious people during last century as "the holy land."[1] And judging not only from the few remains of him which we possess to indicate the character of his theology, his personal experience, and his methods of dealing with souls, and from what we read of him in the historical documents and private diaries of the time, but withal from the place he holds to this day in popular tradition, we think we are warranted to conclude that, more than any other single man, he has left his impress on the religion of the northern Highlands.

The basis of the subsequent external history of that religion was laid in the early re-established influence of a decidedly evangelical Presbyterian ministry in the district of the Firths where it had previously prevailed. The old ministers restored were indeed very few; but

[1] Still more poetically, a valley in Easter Ross, from every house of which the voice of prayer and praise used to be daily heard, was known as "*Nead nan Smeòrach*," "the Nest of Thrushes."

they were men of God, and the people honouring them as confessors of the truth, cordially welcomed them back to their parishes, and returned with open arms as to their first love. Then these ministers were enlightened and also strict men, and now that the ecclesiastical power of the district was in their hands, exercised much watchfulness, both in the common discipline of the Church, and in the ordination of elders and new ministers. Armed with the power of law, supported, too, by the influence of several of the chiefs and by the popular feeling, they succeeded ere long in planting evangelical ministers at many important points throughout the country. In the eastern part of Ross especially the evangelical ministers formed a body so powerful as to be able to present a strong though not invariably successful front of resistance to the corrupting influence of patronage, after it had been reimposed by law, and when for several generations it was enforced by "moderate" domination from without; and so also as, in more than one instance, to afford a refuge and sphere of usefulness to men of piety and gifts from other parts of the Highlands, where the people refused to receive them.

Before the middle of last century the rains descended copiously from heaven and filled many of those pools with water. In particular, at the time when God was so acknowledging the labours of Jonathan Edwards in America, and of Whitfield and Wesley in England, and when remarkable awakenings were taking place at Cambuslang, Kilsyth, and other places in the south of Scotland, similar divine influences were manifested in the parishes of several men of God in the counties of Nairn, Inverness, Cromarty, Ross, and Sutherland.

And those northern revivals, instead of passing away with the first excitement, or of being confined to the parishes first visited, continued and spread in a more unobserved way through one or two generations. They entered the neighbouring parishes, even those whose ministers did not themselves preach the gospel with power ; issuing in the conversion of many souls throughout the region, in a general rise of the religious temperature among professors, in the appearance of a number of laymen of pre-eminent gifts and piety fitted to be elders, and in such a commendation of the truth to the consciences of the general population as to control the mass of society to a degree seldom witnessed for so long a time in any district of equal extent. If asked to assign causes that under God may account for this happy result, we may say, in general, that it appears due to a theology moulded after the rich Puritan type, supported by a discipline as effective as that of the Congregationalists, commended to the sympathies of the people by lay influence as cordially recognised as in Wesleyan Methodism, and grasping and holding them in closely-knitted unity by a strict Presbyterian organization. The Puritan theology appeared not merely in the preaching by the ministers and in the appreciation by the people of an orthodox system of doctrine and of the gospel strictly so called, but also in a constant discrimination from the pulpit between the regenerate and the unregenerate, so as to impress the distinction upon the people, and to prevent applications for admission to the table of the Lord from almost all but those who had asked themselves the question, and had carefully examined themselves regarding it, whether they had been really born again. Then, in every parish where an

awakening took place, the minister, after the example of Thomas Hog, formed the converts and the earnest inquirers into a fellowship society, that used to meet at regular intervals under his own presidency, to confer on points of Christian experience; or, we ought to say rather, the evangelical ministers recognising the spiritual character and utility of meetings that had been handed down through the times of persecution, in which they had been the means of binding God's people together and nourishing their souls, adopted them as their own, in order, by ecclesiastical sanction and wise direction, to prevent irregularities and enhance their usefulness. As it has been found among the Wesleyan Methodists that the class meetings for conference on matters of Christian experience are essential to the vitality of their system, and form one of the most important means of its continuance and extension, so in the Highlands was it with these fellowship meetings. Awakened souls were there introduced to experienced believers, to find their cases understood and described, their doubts resolved, their desires stimulated, and their faith confirmed; there believers edified one another, and there gifted and spiritually-minded men were drawn out from obscurity and prepared for usefulness in all the duties of the eldership. The Presbyterian principle of the organic unity of the whole Church also came into full play. No congregation was isolated. When the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed in a parish, it was not for that parish alone, but for the whole country round: the neighbouring ministers intimated it to their people beforehand, and leaving their pulpits vacant for the day, came with them to be present at and participate in the ordinance. Crowds not only of communicants but of non-

communicants gathered from every quarter, not only on the Sabbath, but on the preparatory days of the solemnity; and while the former held much Christian fellowship with one another, and sat down together at the table of the Lord, the latter were often deeply impressed. Excluded by conscience and the discipline of the Church from joining in communion with the professing people of God, they were in many cases made to groan inwardly, "Oh that I were among these!" and so were prepared to drink in the free offers of the gospel, which the earnest ministers failed not on such occasions specially to address to the unconverted. Thus it was that the influence of truly faithful ministers was extended, and that some of them had even more ministerial success in other parishes than in their own. One result of the feeling of unity was that even when a cold, unacceptable minister was settled in a parish, though the people deserted him, they seldom thought of seceding from the Established Church; for the brethren they loved belonged to it, and they needed but to walk a few miles farther on the Lord's day to find ministers who were able to feed their souls; while at home they could attend private meetings for edification, held generally on Sabbath evenings by Christian laymen, during the years of an incumbency which they regarded as a practical vacancy. And thus as the internal growth of religion in the district was not interrupted by any intervening reign of Moderatism, so neither was it hindered by any important divisions. In some outlying corners, indeed, disaffection towards particular ministers gave rise to painful breaches of church order, and lay teaching, in a very few instances, to departure from sound doctrine and morality. These

things, however, were merely local, and generally disappeared under the scriptural teaching and authority of ministers of a higher class.

As soon as the abolition of feudal power in the middle of last century opened the territories of the Jacobite clans in the West to gospel influences, evangelical religion began to spread in that direction. It reached the Atlantic Ocean, and early in the present century entered with great power also into the Northern Hebrides. The semi-Scandinavian county of Caithness about the same period shared largely in the blessing. And thus it was that the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843 found almost the whole northern Highlands united in religious sentiment, and animated more strongly by loyalty to the Church than by any other public feeling whatsoever.

A few words must be added as to the practical character and effects of this religion. In attempting this, we shall, for obvious reasons, speak chiefly of the generations that are past. Doubtless the subject may be viewed in different lights, according to the religious standpoint of the observer. To those who estimate the piety of a country by the number of persons in it who speak of themselves with confidence as on the way to heaven, the state of a large part of the Highlands must appear to have been a very dismal one; for such language was by no means commonly heard. The distinction between the regenerate and unregenerate, which was constantly kept before men's minds not only from the pulpit but by the private and public conferences for self-examination, had undoubtedly the tendency of deterring not only manifest unbelievers from professing themselves to be the people of God,

but some true believers too. Neither can it be denied that the habitual self-jealousy which was cultivated in believers was at times carried to a morbid excess. The fellowship meetings, in their original idea admirable, and fitted to be very useful, assumed, we know not how early, a one-sided character; the questions discussed at them came to be *exclusively* questions of self-examination, the subjects being invariably in one form or other the distinctive marks of true grace. This would have been well if the fellowship of Christians consisted only in helping one another to look within in order to find the evidences of Christ dwelling in them; if it did not consist also, if it ought not to consist equally or more, in helping one another to lay hold of the grace of the offered Saviour, and in stirring one another up to help a perishing world. If, in some other places, Christian fellowship unduly confines itself to the subjects of the believer's privileges and work, and eschews everything that might lead to self-jealousy and self-examination; so in the Highlands it seems to us that the latter subject injuriously encroached upon the two former. It alone was discussed in the private monthly conferences of professing Christians; and as the only public conferences attended by all classes were the great ones held in the open air before communions, there too it alone was discussed. Thus there was undoubtedly generated a too introspective habit of mind. Robert Hall has somewhere remarked that we are practically governed more by our habits of thought than by our beliefs; and so, though the general teaching of the pulpits clearly exhibited Christ as the only ground of a sinner's trust, and though this was understood by most, and rejoiced in by not a few, yet the introspective habit of

mind unquestionably interfered with the simple rejoicing exercise of faith, and unduly increased with many the difficulty of profession. In other districts it is not uncommon to hear the language of appropriation and high assurance from the lips of carnal men; in those Highlands, such language was seldom heard even from true believers. We have no wish to defend either extreme, even as we know that the ablest and best Highland ministers did not defend it. How some of the ablest and best laymen also viewed the matter, may appear from the following anecdote:—At a fellowship meeting in the Isle of Skye, a number of speakers to "the question" had dwelt on the distinguishing marks of saving faith. The most experienced Christian present—a catechist, named Alister M'Leod—was called up last to give his opinion. "We have been hearing a great deal to-day," said the venerable man, "about saving faith, its actings, and its fruits; and it will be well for us to give good heed to what has been said, and to seek more of the faith we have been hearing of. But is not there a risk lest, in thinking so much about precious faith, we lose sight of its great Object? This only would I say to you, Was faith crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of your faith?" We have seen the eyes of another aged Highland Christian, to whom we repeated the anecdote when he was in a somewhat discouraged frame, light up with joy under a keen appreciation of it. In fact, nothing could more exactly state the case, or show more clearly on the one hand the real risk attendant on the disproportionate cultivation of the habit of self-analysis, nor, on the other hand, how open the minds of the more intelligent Christians were to receive judicious warning to

guard against it. We do not say they did all of them sufficiently guard against it.

If the reverence for the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, the dread of spiritual injury from unworthy communicating, and the stress laid on the duty of self-examination, lessened the number of communicants, it proportionally raised the general standard of profession, and deepened the tone of religion. Of course there were great diversities among them; but it would be difficult to find finer specimens of Christian character than were some of "the men," and, let us add, of the women of the Highlands. Christians more humble, prayerful, and watchful, more full of reverence and love, more alive to the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, and more ardently longing for the salvation of the world, we have not seen. Seldom speaking of themselves to their fellow-men as Christians sure of heaven, they not the less, especially in their hours of nearest communion, had the blessed enjoyment of the hope; and by the spirituality of their walk they constrained others to recognise them as Christ's. It was to God Himself in secret, when lying lowest at the foot of the Cross, rather than before men, that they cried "Abba, Father!" Under a deep consciousness of besetting sin, they may have sometimes shrunk from naming their own unworthy names in connection with their Lord's, for fear of dishonouring Him whom they adored and loved; but they rejoiced to see Him honoured, and to hear of the extension of His kingdom; their fear of disobeying or seeming to deny Him, and their desire of closer fellowship with Him, carried them over all their sense of unworthiness to His holy table; they delighted also to speak of Him, and recommend Him to the

young; and they were bold as lions in maintaining the authority of His laws in the presence of an unbelieving world. Such men as these were recognised as the model Christians. They possessed an extraordinary influence; and while ministers who were not believed to be converted men received only the respect due to their worldly position, and in a religious point of view were reckoned worse than other men, because souls were perishing under them, such Christians as we have described were regarded with reverence as men who had real power with God, and, if they were ministers as well as Christians, with a veneration that was almost unbounded. These, then, were the true leaders of the people. And, let us add, that the people who enjoyed this leadership became, externally at least, the most religious, and, at the same time, the most moral population in Scotland. Statistics seem to prove that the population is still the most moral in Scotland. Whether it still retains its old religious character, or is living in part on the memory of the past, is too delicate a question to be here entered into. Future historians will be better able to examine it, and if they find there has been a decline, to assign the probable causes.

Space forbids us to attempt even a brief sketch of the eminent ministers, and far less of the private Christians of the North; and a bare catalogue of names would be uninviting. We will only, therefore, devote a few sentences to some distinguished ministers from whom the author of the following Sermons was descended.

JOHN CALDER was a native of Sutherlandshire, and became minister of Calder or Cawdor, in Nairnshire, in the year 1705. A pious lady having discovered that

he was much given to prayer, sent him to college—for the last two years of his course, to Leyden, in Holland. His ministry was one of remarkable power, and his fame and influence extended far beyond his own parish. A vivid tradition, clothed by Highland imagination in somewhat poetical form, still lingers in the district, regarding the deep gloom with which the announcement of his death overspread the country.

JAMES CALDER was his son. He was a grandson, by his mother's side, of that Mrs. Lilias Dunbar who has been already mentioned.[1] He became minister first of Ardersier, and afterwards of Croy, in the north-east of Inverness-shire. There is hardly a name in the Highlands of greater celebrity than his. His unpublished diary, correspondence, and other remains, as well as the testimony of tradition, prove him to have been an accomplished scholar, a genial, lovable, and withal wise and prudent man; a watchful, holy Christian, jealous of his own heart, and yet rejoicing in the Lord; and, finally, an able, laborious, and successful minister. He was at length able to record in his diary such an entry as this:—"*Souls are flocking to Christ.*" He died in 1775. He left three sons, all of them devoted ministers.

CHARLES CALDER, one of these, was minister of Urquhart, in Ross-shire (better known as Ferintosh). A man of refined mind, scholarly attainments, and holy life, of much tenderness and brokenness of spirit, and yet a very able and successful minister of the gospel. He was one of the principal instruments in spreading and deepening evangelical religion in the central part of Ross-shire. On his deathbed, he, for the first time,

[1] A memoir of her may be seen in Anderson's *Ladies of the Covenant.* Edinburgh, 1862.

mentioned the circumstance that at the age of nine he had set apart a day for prayer in a wood, adding that he was as convinced as of any fact that on that day the Holy Spirit took possession of his heart for Christ. Suffering long and severely, he longed to depart, but declared that he would willingly remain as long as it pleased God under the same sufferings, were this to be the means of bringing one soul to Christ. He died in the year 1812. He was married to a lady of that Brodie family in Morayshire from which the late "good" Duchess of Gordon was also descended, and which, since the days of the persecutions, had contributed a succession of witnesses to the cause of Christ. His second daughter, Anne, became wife of the eminent minister whom we next mention, and mother of the principal subject of our sketch.[1]

ANGUS M'INTOSH, D.D., was a native of Strathdearn, in Inverness-shire. Early dedicated to God by devoted parents, and converted by His grace, he was ordained as minister of a Gaelic chapel in Glasgow in 1792, was translated to Tain in 1797, and died in 1831, leaving a reputation for piety and ministerial excellencies unsurpassed by any of the more recently departed worthies of the northern Highlands. His Glasgow ministry was brief, but largely blessed. To Tain he was called by the voice of the people prevailing over an attempt to impose on them, by force of patronage, a minister they did not esteem. The magistrates and elders of that town had, at every vacancy since the Revolution, resolutely resisted or ignored what they held to be the usurpation

[1] Mr. Calder's eldest, and only other daughter, was married to Dr. Alexander Stewart of Dingwall, afterwards of the Canongate, Edinburgh (father of the late Mr. Stewart of Cromarty), whose memoir was published, Edinburgh, 1822.

of patronage, and had practically made good their right of choice. And this right they had on each occasion exercised so as to secure a succession of evangelical and spiritually-minded ministers, and to preserve to the place its ancient character as a centre of religious influence. Of those ministers, Dr. Angus M'Intosh was probably the greatest. On his settlement he was[1] "at "once recognised by the many eminent Christians then "in the northern counties as the master in Israel. "'The great Ross-shire ministers now gone,' said one of "these Christians, after hearing him a few times, 'had "each his own characteristic excellency. The preaching "of Mr. M'Phail [of Resolis] was experimental; Mr. "Fraser, of Alness [author of an admirable work on "Sanctification, which has been recently reprinted by "the Tract Society], was the systematic divine; and Mr. "Porteous [of Kilmuir Easter], was the expounder of "Scripture, and my belief is that Mr. M'Intosh com-"bines the excellencies of all the three.' When it was "known that he was to assist at the communion in any "parish, thousands came from great distances to be "present. He almost always presided in the open "air in Gaelic on the Lord's day, while the smaller "English congregation met in the church under "the parish minister. . . . Dr. M'Intosh enters the "tent, and after praise he offers up a solemn, moving "prayer. He reads his text, and for a time he is

[1] We are indebted for the (somewhat abridged) passage distinguished by quotation marks, to the Rev. Angus M'Gillivray's *Sketches of Religion and Revivals of Religion in the North Highlands during the last century* (Edinburgh, John Maclaren, 1859). The sketch of Dr. Angus M'Intosh in this interesting little book was recognised by Dr. Charles C. Mackintosh as a true description of his father.

" calm, with little action; and his deep-toned, melo-
" dious voice is heard by the most distant of eight
" or ten thousand people. He begins by showing the
" great doctrines revealed in his text, and the great
" lessons taught in it. Then his application com-
" mences; his eye kindles, and his voice is louder; his
" very countenance shows how thoroughly he believes
" what he says. At one time you see deep, awful com-
" passion,—a cloud on the countenance; at another, the
" sun breaks through the clouds, and there is a beauti-
" ful smile. He comes to the fencing of the tables, and
" after a few solemn truths addressed to the worldly
" professor, deals with God's children. He follows the
" perplexed inquirer through all his wanderings; he
" comes down to the first breathings of the divine life
" in the soul; and he encourages the weakest to come
" with all his darkness and perplexity to meet Christ
" at his table. After the communion, he generally con-
" cluded with an address; and here he specially shone.
" After a few pithy words to the communicants, he
" turned to the thousands of the young and thoughtless
" before him, and he spoke to them God's message with
" a power, and an unction, and an authority which
" made the most careless listen. In telling sinners of
" their danger, he spoke as one who saw it vividly; his
" fine eye was frequently filled with tears, and his voice
" and manner made them feel as if thunder were rolling
" over their head. This was followed up by holding
" forth Christ as the living, present, all-gracious
" Saviour; and by the most melting appeals to the
" worst and the vilest to come to Him *even now*, with
" all their sins, that they might *even now* be saved. He
" seemed unwilling to part with them till they fled for

"refuge to Christ, and with a thorough knowledge of "their own language and phrases, he plied them with "illustrations and arguments." On these occasions, as he himself declared when near the end of his earthly course, he used to feel as if he were already breathing the very air of heaven; and so richly blessed were they that for a long time after he came to Ross-shire, a number of persons from other parishes came to consult him about their souls. We have been told of one address of his at Nigg to communicants at the table, which was so blessed to lookers-on, that Christian people named that service "*bord na trocair*"—"the table of mercy." Indeed, we have often heard it said that he obtained a far greater number of seals to his ministry in other parishes than in his own, though there also it was greatly blessed. No man in the North united so much loving tenderness with so much ministerial authority. He won the confidence of the weakest Christian; the presumptuous and the insubordinate, to whom inferior ministers in outlying spots had given undue place in private intercourse or in fellowship meetings, were in *his* presence reduced to propriety or silence. At the end of last century or beginning of this, the General Assembly of the Scottish Church, then under "Moderate" sway, were scouting the idea of missions to the heathen world, so that zealous evangelical men in the South had no way of fulfilling Christ's commission but by forming a Missionary Society outside the Church Courts. At the same time, Dr. Angus M'Intosh took the lead in forming a "Northern Missionary Society" for the like great ends. On two occasions, one of them the licensing of an unworthy preacher, the other the settlement of an orthodox, but in the

opinion of the people, worldly minister, he, with his evangelical brethren of the Presbytery of Tain, were on the brink of compulsory secession from the Established Church; and this event, which would have altered the whole complexion of the ecclesiastical history of the northern Highlands, was prevented only by providential circumstances that enabled them to escape by a hair's-breadth from an actual violation of their consciences, and an actual domination over the Christian people. What was virtually his death-bed testimony was given during an illness in the year 1828, which he himself and all around him thought would be his last. "I am very weak, as weak as an infant," he said to a dear friend in the ministry, "but I know whom I have believed." "My kind friends would, if they could," he said to those who were endeavouring to relieve his bodily sufferings, "construct a bridge to take me over Jordan; but, oh! with what contempt I can look at everything else when I get but a glimpse of the finished work of Christ." He addressed loving words to the Christian friends who were admitted to see him, and by them sent messages to others. "Give my love to your dear partner," he said to one of his elders, after bidding him an affectionate farewell, "and tell her that I hope to meet her in Immanuel's happy land." Contrary to expectation, he recovered. "I do believe," he wrote a few months after to a Christian friend, "that I was brought back from the gates of death in answer to the prayers of my own people, and of many others. Several of them who have most of the spirit of prayer, like yourself, never believed that I was to be removed by my late illness. . . . As for myself, I certainly did think that my change was come, and I was very willing

to depart, expecting to be with Christ in another and a better world. The only time I have addressed my people since the fever left me, I could and did tell them that the doctrines I was sent to preach to them were the foundation of my hope and confidence when I thought myself ready to launch into eternity, and that I would not for worlds preach any other gospel than what I have formerly preached." He ministered to his people for two years longer. God saw it meet to make His servant pass through waters of deep affliction before his departure. The death in India of his eldest son, a young man of the highest Christian character and promise, was a peculiarly heavy blow; but he was sustained under it by the gladdening hope of so soon meeting him in the heavenly land. His last illness was short. "And," to quote again from Mr. M'Gillivray, "amid sorrow deeper and more wide-spread than ever I saw in the North for any other death, the grave closed over Dr. Angus M'Intosh."

II.—BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

DR. CHARLES MACKINTOSH'S hearers will need no other memorial of him than his own discourses, such as those which are given in this volume from every period of his ministry. They, as they read, will recognise the thoughts, the words, the style of their revered departed pastor, and memory will supply the voice and aspect of the living man, together with the deep pathos, the solemn reverence, the divine unction, the mingled authority and humility—all that, combining with the impression of his holy life, gave weight and penetrating force to his calmly spoken words. Other readers too,

if their souls are at all in sympathy with his, will be sensible of a rare combination of excellencies in these sermons; such as the simple beauty of their style and structure, the comprehensive view and lucid statement of pure Scriptural truth, the union of loyalty to God with the deepest sympathy towards sinful men, the discriminative administration of warning and of comfort, and the faithfulness and tenderness of appeal. Arranged here so as to exhibit the plan and operation of God's wondrous mercy from its unsearchable fountain in the Divine heart to its result in the complete salvation of the redeemed, they may even be viewed as furnishing an unconscious self-portraiture of their author. In them he has unwittingly revealed himself, for they were emphatically the utterance of his experience and of his faith.

Yet sermons, more almost than any other kind of composition, require a knowledge of the man in order to exert their rightful influence; and he was one of those rare Christian men and ministers whose personal character enhanced many-fold the power of his preaching while he lived, and claims loving remembrance now that he is gone. For a full biography there are indeed no materials. His was not a life of external incident; he never pushed himself into prominence in public affairs; his forte did not lie in original speculation, nor in the utterance of brilliant quotable remarks; while as to the secrets of his inner life with God, it was characteristic of him to shrink from revealing these to others, and he never committed them to a private diary. Description also is rendered unusually difficult by the very symmetry of his character, and its freedom from points and irregularities for the pencil to seize on. Yet

his was the very opposite of a negative character. It was one of great power as well as singular beauty. If it never suggested comparison with the romantic architecture of a Gothic edifice, it recalled some chaste Grecian temple that satisfied the eye by its exquisite proportions, while it was hallowed by what no Grecian temple ever had—the presence of the living God.

Of the parentage and ancestry we have indicated, he was born at Tain on the 5th of October 1806. In boyhood he was educated at the Tain Academy, where his progress was such that he was sent to the University of King's College, Aberdeen, at the unusually early age of eleven. Having there completed the four years' curriculum of Arts, he entered the Divinity classes at Glasgow when only sixteen.

There is no reason to think that he had at that time experienced any decided religious change. Always indeed a gentle and amiable boy, though full of fun and fine playfulness, he had been so uniformly well-behaved and conscientious, and had manifested such a reverence for sacred things, that some pious friends of the family used in after years to declare their opinion that he had been sanctified from the womb. Yet one of his most intimate college friends assures us that, during his first two sessions at the Divinity Hall, he gave no token of religious earnestness. One asks with some surprise how it was that, even if he himself, a mere boy, could enter thoughtlessly on preparations for the Christian ministry, such a man as his father could sanction the step—a man so profoundly impressed with the necessity of a divine call to the ministry, and with the greatness of the change implied in true conversion, and in whose own early life, moreover, had

occurred the following impressive incident:—He had, when a college student, been one day walking with his father in his native valley of Strathdearn. They came to the bridge of the river Findhorn, then in tumultuous flood. "Is not that fearful?" said the older Christian to the student, as they looked over the parapet on the wild rush of the swollen waters; then after a pause he added with a solemnity the son never forgot, "Much as I love you, I would rather see you swept away by that stream, than living to be a graceless minister." At the time the old man said this, he had in reality a very favourable opinion of his son's religious principles; but the anecdote is characteristic of the feeling of Highland Christians on the subject of the ministry, and Dr. Angus M'Intosh used in after years to relate it with deep feeling. How then did he judge and act as to his own son? The fact seems to be that early impressions had been visible in Charles, which, to his father's discerning eye, gave token of the Spirit's working; that he had formed high hopes of what his son might by grace become, and had in secret dedicated him to the work of God; that he therefore sent him to attend the theological classes, though in the absence of decided evidence of a renewed heart, he did so without committing him in any way to become a minister, and while even allowing a secular profession to be kept in view. But undoubtedly his constant prayer and hope was that ere the time for decision arrived, Divine grace might call his son to the higher pursuit.

It was in the third year of Charles Mackintosh's attendance at the Hall that his friends observed a marked change in his deportment,—deep seriousness taking the place of light-hearted merriment. We have

heard a treatise of Thomas Halyburton mentioned as one of the immediate means of this change. His serious impressions went and returned for some time, but were at length fixed, never to lose their hold of him, by a passage of Scripture, which, as his hearers may remember, he used in after years to quote with peculiar impressiveness in his pulpit appeals to impenitent sinners: "*Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me*" (Prov. i. 24-28). He felt himself to be the man pointed at in this awful passage, and for months its threatenings seemed to shut against him the door of mercy.

His venerable father appears to have exercised an important influence on him at this crisis. Reserved though Charles all his life was to common acquaintances, and even to Christian friends, in reference to his spiritual experience, his present distress was too keen to permit of concealment from so wise and tender a counsellor. His own letters we have not seen, but their tenor may be judged of by the following extracts from his father's replies, which we would fain have given at length, did space permit:—

"TAIN, 12*th January* 1825.

". . . I am certainly well pleased that you know, *so far*, the plagues of your own heart. The evils of which you complain naturally *reign* in the hearts of the children of

men; but of the bulk of mankind it may be said they know not that matters are so bad with them. . . . Oh may the Lord visit you speedily with His salvation! It is difficult indeed to convince us of sin, but it is still more difficult to persuade a convinced sinner to rely on Christ as his own Saviour. . . . Tell the Lord those plagues of your heart which you mention to me; tell Him often of them; and plead the promises of His grace for effecting your spiritual cure. His word, accompanied with power, will, I trust, be fire and a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces. I was longing to hear you lamenting the spiritual maladies of your nature, . . . but true religion and salvation do not depend on horrors and distresses of mind. The Lord can, and generally does, effect His own gracious purposes in a gentler way. . . . Faith is the gift of God, but it cometh by the word of God. And it is as much our duty to endeavour to believe as it is to pray."

"*28th January.*

". . . It is evident to me that the Spirit of God is striving with you, and convincing you of sin. Oh, beware of resisting or quenching the Spirit! Every evil you complain of is certainly to be found in your heart, and a thousand other evils which you have not named, and which you cannot at present name. . . . But it is the Physician alone that can cure your diseases. Were you to shed an ocean of tears, this ocean would not wash away the pollution of the least of your offences. The blood of Jesus, the Son of God, was necessary to cleanse our polluted hearts. . . . And do not suppose that the heart will relent, that there will be any contrition of heart, any ingenuous sorrow and saving repentance, until the soul views Christ by faith as an all-sufficient and infinitely willing Saviour, and rests all his hopes of salvation on His everlasting righteousness. . . . Now, my dear Charles, your first duty, your great duty, is to receive Christ as your own Saviour, as He is offered to you in the gospel. Do not suppose that you ought to keep aloof from Him till you are

better prepared to receive Him. You will never be better than you are till you believe with the heart unto righteousness. It is no presumption to appropriate Him, without a moment's delay, on the warrant of the free offer and invitation of the gospel. . . . This is a time in which you ought to be often on your knees, and offering up ejaculatory prayers wherever you are. I hope I need not tell you that it is peculiarly dangerous for you to associate with vain and foolish students."

"21*st March.*

". . . On the subject which of all others is nearest my heart . . . the temptations of which you complain are such as are common to men to whom the Lord is gracious; but to persons of this character they are inexpressibly distressing. Such temptations drive them to the throne of grace, make them exceedingly vile in their own eyes, and dispose them to be willing debtors to free grace for salvation. Let me assure you that the surest and shortest and safest way for you to attain peace of mind, is to depend on Him who came to save His people from their sins, and to bruise the *head* of the old serpent. No man ever had true faith until he was sensible he could not believe. And the man that feels this, and sees the sin of unbelief as the greatest of his sins, is in the highway to obtain faith and salvation. Watch and wait at the posts of Wisdom's doors, and open your polluted heart under the effusion of redeeming blood, and you will find peace and rest to your soul. And the more firmly you depend upon Christ as your own Saviour, the more will you love Him and His ways, and the greater will be your respect to all His commandments. I will continue to hope that the Lord will teach you savingly."

The temptations alluded to in the last of these extracts arose chiefly from the feeling of inability to believe, leading him to the conclusion, "I can do nothing," and so bringing him near to despair. When in this dangerous

condition, in which many have been tempted to say, "*There is no hope, no, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go,*" he was greatly helped by the perusal of Andrew Fuller's noble treatise,—*The Gospel worthy of all acceptation.* That treatise, written by Fuller when yet a young man, as the fruit of his struggle out of the hyper-Calvinism amid which he had been bred in the little Baptist church at Soham, has as its object to refute the perverse inferences which a narrow logic is apt to draw from the doctrines of grace, that God, who creates faith in the sinner's heart, cannot command him to believe, so as to make it his duty, nor invite him so as to make it his available privilege. The reading of this book drove Charles Mackintosh out of his self-accusing despair. It convinced him that unbelief was no mere misfortune, but his greatest sin; and this conviction proved, as his father had predicted, the "highway to faith and salvation," through a joyful appropriation of Christ freely offered in the gospel.

We know not exactly when, but it cannot have been long after receiving the affectionate paternal counsels we have quoted, that he began not only to taste, but to drink abundantly of the wells of salvation. A season followed in which, as we find him mentioning to a friend several years after, he "had continual delight in contemplating and in appropriating God in Christ."

He was eighteen years of age at this great crisis of his spiritual history; and from that time to the end of his earthly course his life was one of pre-eminent spirituality and consistent holiness. His estimate of his own Christianity indeed was always very low, and his experience was sometimes chequered; but few men have ever so adorned the doctrine of God their Saviour.

Soon after this he came before the Presbytery of Tain for trials, with a view to receiving license to preach the gospel; his own sense of unripeness being overcome by the opinions and wishes of those whom he most revered. The severity of his studies at this time led however to results that deeply influenced his whole subsequent life. Underrating his own acquirements; aware how much was generally expected from him as the son of "the great Dr. Mackintosh;" impelled moreover by a keen enjoyment of study, and by an ardour that "would allow him to do nothing unless he did it with all his heart," he made what he himself afterwards regarded as "foolish and sinfully-excessive exertions." He denied himself even needful sleep, frequently giving most of the night as well as all the day to study. The result was a severe illness, which not only compelled him to desist from study for a time, but inflicted an injury on his constitution from which he never entirely recovered.

At this period he fell for a second, and unless we are mistaken, last time in his life, into a state of prolonged spiritual despondency, connected largely, as his wise father did not hesitate to tell him, with the state of his health; though, at the same time, with a still deeper work of the Spirit than before. The sense of indwelling sin became so terrible, that he drew the most painful inferences regarding his state before God, thinking himself bound to question the genuineness of his past conversion. "I can never," he wrote to an intimate friend, "bring myself to believe that the very humblest in attainments of God's children feel anything *in kind* as I do; and God forbid that I should delude myself by supposing so." Moreover, he was oppressed with the thought that he was the guilty author, through excessive

"study not consecrated to the Divine glory," of his own illness and consequent inability to work for God; and that for this the hand of God was now put forth against him. "No wonder," he wrote afterwards, "though the arrows of the Almighty should drink up my spirit. I saw too that I was the vilest of the vile, the very chief of sinners, and this led me to doubt the efficacy of redeeming blood, and to say, 'There is no balm in Gilead' *for me.* This state of mind, when it did not lead me to the borders of despair, brought me in a way which I need not describe to absolute atheism. Blessed be God! I was not left long at any time to such damnable thoughts, or assuredly I should have sunk under them." His father's twofold advice to him was—to use means for the removal of bodily disorders, and gospel remedies for the cure of the soul and the enjoyment of spiritual comfort. "Be sure," he wrote, "that Satan misrepresents the gospel plan of salvation to you. . . . It delights the Saviour's heart to pardon iniquity, transgression, and sin; and where sin hath abounded, there will grace abound much more." Then after a description alike skilful and tender of the temptations by which God had prepared some of His most eminent servants for usefulness in the ministry, he added, "and I hope this will be the case with my beloved Charles."

The twofold relief anticipated by his father soon came, so far at least that he was able to return home and receive license to preach the gospel, when he had barely reached the legal age of twenty-one. After a month or two the state of his health obliged him again to leave, and to go south for medical advice. But his public ministrations had already raised the highest expectations of his future career. "I would deem it

improper," wrote his father to a Christian friend, "to tell you how much my serious people are bound up in him, and how acceptable his discourses were in those parishes where he preached." In fact, we have heard it told that the father used with the most touching humility to express to his elders his feeling that his son far outstripped himself in grace; while the son, at the very same time, thought himself utterly unworthy to preach in the pulpit of such a father. This is a kind of humility remarkably characteristic of the best specimens of Highland piety, easily affected indeed, and the affectation of it peculiarly offensive, but very touching and beautiful when it is real.

While he was away in quest of health, the people of Tain were already taking steps to procure from the patroness of the parish a presentation in his behalf as his father's assistant and successor. But he himself was then lamenting what seemed to him the growing darkness and insensibility of his soul, and was appealing to his father by letter in this affecting strain:— "Write me as you would a child ignorant of the very rudiments of the doctrine of Christ. Set before me the gospel in all its beautiful simplicity and infinite importance; and who knows but the prayer accompanying the counsel may be heard in my behalf, that so I may feel the active operation of that precious faith that will condemn myself and glorify Christ, that will work by love and purify the heart, that will keep me clinging constantly to Christ, and earnestly desirous to live only to Him? It is not seldom that I shudder when I think of the attainments of him for whom you have designed the important office of assisting YOU in the office of the ministry. But I am not conscious of having ever, on

any occasion, concealed from you the workings of my heart. . . . Alas, I never knew the honour and privilege of being *divinely* set apart to declare the unsearchable riches of Christ, until I felt my want of the heavenly warrant and commission." His father replied in a long and remarkable letter, which made so deep an impression on the son that we know of his having quoted its substance many years after to a similarly tempted soul.

"It is pleasant to me,"—wrote the tender and wise counsellor,—"yea, it is pleasant to Jehovah, to hear you like Ephraim bemoaning yourself, and to hear you saying with Paul, 'I am the chief of sinners.' But it is painful to hear you lamenting that your wound is incurable, and questioning whether you have any right to apply to yourself the balm that is in Gilead. . . . I must candidly tell you that your case is of a complicated nature. The Lord has a gracious hand in your spiritual trouble, Satan has a malicious hand in it, and natural disease increases it.

"The Lord in mercy is probing your wounds and bruises and putrifying sores to the bottom, to make you not only humbly willing but ardently desirous to employ the Great Physician to effect a cure of what would be incurable in any hands but His own. It would be wrong in me to conceal from you that I am persuaded that the Spirit of God is convincing you of sin in order to make Christ precious to you. The little knowledge I have of His dealings with myself and others enables me to speak with confidence on this subject. And I trust that the same omnipotent Agent who now works as a Spirit of bondage will soon work as a Spirit of adoption. At evening time it shall be light. You

have as good a right and warrant to appropriate the Saviour and the blessings of His purchase as any poor sinner ever had, and you must view it as your sin not to be availing yourself of your privilege. You will not question Christ's power to save, and you ought not to question His willingness. You know who has said, '*And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*' . . . But I have said that Satan has a malicious hand in your distress. Could he keep you quiet and secure, he would never tempt you to think that there is no mercy for such as you are. But as the Lord is convincing you of sin and misery, he does all in his power to keep you from the Saviour, and to make you conclude that your case is hopeless. We need not be ignorant of his devices. He has been a liar from the beginning. And the Lord will rebuke and restrain him. It is your duty to resist him by the sword of the Spirit, and when you do so he will flee from you.

"Again, bodily complaints do also add greatly to your mental distress. Your ails represent things through a false medium, disturb the imagination, becloud the mind, and surcharge the heart with grief and sadness. They weaken the body and the mind, unfit one for exertion, and suggest distressing fears where there is no cause for fear. Now it is your duty to use natural means for the cure of a natural disease. While you apply to Heaven for the spiritual salvation of which you stand in need, you are well employed in submitting yourself to the wise treatment of a medical gentleman who will feel interested in your restoration to health. . . . Take as much exercise as you can in the open air. Frequent the society of friends. Solitude will increase your complaint. Agreeable conversation, though not

strictly religious, may be useful to soul and body. It is much calculated to banish *melancholy;* and that you have a great degree of melancholy at this time is not to be doubted, for it is a constant effect of your bodily ails." And then he tells him of the efforts in progress to secure his settlement in Tain, saying, "There is not another parish in Scotland where you would have a greater prospect of usefulness. But be not alarmed. Nothing will be done hastily."

The son wrote to thank his father for "this precious letter, deserving much and repeated perusal, and much prayer accompanying it." Doubtless it helped to prepare him to accept the presentation which was soon thereafter put into his hands. His own apprehensions of unworthiness, in which he wondered he could never get any of his friends to sympathize, were overcome by their decidedly expressed opinion that the call was from God, and was indeed the express voice of His providence. Besides, his desire to lighten the labours of his father, who was now feeling the pressure of years and infirmity, moved him strongly to consent.

Scarcely had he intimated his acceptance when he was recalled home to attend what was supposed to be his father's deathbed. "Charles, let your face shine; be much on the mount with God; the praying minister is the preaching minister; let your face shine, Charles!" Such was the commencement of a sublime charge which the aged servant of Christ, full of the joyful prospect of speedily entering Immanuel's land, addressed to the beloved son whom he was leaving in trust with his flock. Contrary to his own expectation, Dr. Angus M'Intosh recovered; and in June 1828, Charles was ordained as his co-pastor. He preached one sermon,

and was then forced to leave home again in wretched health.

His absence in the Isle of Skye, in Glasgow, and in London, was to him, in many respects, a momentous one. It lasted for two years; his sufferings for the greater part of the time being very severe. So also for some time was his mental distress; for he was weighed down under the responsibility of a ministerial charge which he was unable to occupy, and under the thought of the burden which his father was left to bear; and along with this his spiritual troubles returned in their strength. But by-and-bye a considerable improvement took place in his health; and he experienced a spiritual enlargement that constituted an epoch in his life second only to his first conversion. It was ten months after his ordination that he wrote from London to a Christian friend in the following words, which those who knew him will appreciate as indicating much more even than they express:—"I will not deny that I have felt of late something of the *privilege* of preaching Christ to my poor fellow-sinners, that I formerly was almost a stranger to, except for some few and scattered moments when engaged in the duty. I tremble at times to think of the *source* of these feelings; and yet I cannot *but feel* that there is something in the plan of redemption that just suits a vile, loathsome, black-hearted sinner like me. I cannot but be affected to think of some in particular who are strangers to its glory. And I feel that if I shall ever *get the commission* to declare Christ's unsearchable riches to others, Divine grace will be more magnified by the very worthlessness and utter insignificance of the instrument. . . . I am grieved and cut to the heart when I look back,

and when I look within; and yet, till now, never had I such real and blessed enjoyment. Oh, pray for me, that my hard heart may be thoroughly melted, that I may be brought to and kept at the footstool of Divine mercy, in adoring wonder that the door has not yet been shut, and that I may not be suffered to mistake the smoke of natural feeling for the light and heat of the Spirit of God. If one who abused so many privileges, and continued obstinate during so long and trying a process, shall ever be put in trust with the gospel, there may indeed be wonder among the angels in heaven."

"Never," he wrote to his mother, eight months later, from Dublin, "never had I so unconquerable and insatiable a thirst for home as now oppresses me. I say again and again, 'Oh that I had wings like a dove!' . . . I am overwhelmed with shame when I think that my revered, and saintly, and beloved father ever called me his helper in the great and precious work of the ministry; and at this moment I would give the world, were it mine, for the assurance that the great Head of the Church has commissioned me to go forth, as the weakest of His messengers, yet still as bearing that sacred and privileged name, to declare His unsearchable riches to my fellow-sinners. I long much, very much, my dearest mother, for the conversion of ——. What is all else if the soul perishes! And what the enjoyment of all that this world can afford in comparison with the enjoyment, however feeble and interrupted, of communion with God."

We know not that we could quote any documents that would convey a truer and more vivid portraiture than these of Charles Mackintosh, as a Christian and as a minister of the gospel. "It does me good," wrote

his father to him two months later still, when mourning over the death of his eldest son, "it does me good to hear how the Lord has hitherto supported and comforted you. You have got the start of me, and I am far from grudging you that privilege. Oh, my dearest Charles, be you thankful. Oh, be thankful for what the Lord has done for your soul. And though clouds and darkness should succeed your light and joy, do not suspect that the latter was a delusion. Keep near to God, and pray without ceasing, and take care how you provoke your Beloved to leave you, or to withdraw His consolations till He please."

There is reason to think that though at various periods of his life, especially when he was under the depressing influence of returning illness, "clouds and darkness" may have temporarily shadowed his light and joy, he never again lost hold of that "good hope through grace" which he had attained. He seldom indeed revealed to others intentionally his secret conflicts, and still seldomer his spiritual joys; only all around him saw and felt—for his whole life made it manifest—how closely he walked with God, and how constantly and deeply he was exercised to maintain his communion with heaven unbroken.

In August 1830, in his twenty-fourth year, he returned home in improved, though by no means established, health, and commenced his stated labours as his father's colleague. "I would not give an acre of poor Easter Ross for all London," he had said in reference to attempts to persuade him to think of a charge in the great metropolis. His opening sermon (on Isaiah lv. 8, 9, "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the*

heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts") sounded the very key-note of his ministry. As one who not only "bore the name," but who indeed was the ambassador of Christ, he preached the wondrous mercy of God; and did so with a spiritual unction and solemn earnestness, while at the same time with a youthful enthusiasm, and with a simple grace, at that time rising even to elegance of style and manner, that produced an extraordinary impression. The younger portion of the flock were attracted and riveted, at the same time that they were solemnized. The older Christians were astonished at the wealth and depth of spiritual experience, as well as at the maturity of judgment, in so young a man, and at once took him to their hearts as the exponent of all that they believed and most deeply felt; loving him all the more that they recognised in his matter and manner much both of his father and of his maternal grandfather. The general feeling was very much what was many years later expressed by an episcopal minister from Ireland who heard him preach in the south of France:—"That remarkable man has all the depth of the old divines, with the freshness of the moderns." A sense of thankfulness pervaded the parish that another man of God, so richly endowed, was granted to continue the succession of faithful ministers with which it had been favoured,—a man in whose prayers was heard the very utterance of a contrite heart trusting in redeeming blood; who spoke from the pulpit what he not only believed, but had experienced, and yet who preached not himself but Christ; who, with a dignity in his bearing that befitted an ambassador of the "Great King," conjoined a humility that made him

afraid to bring himself into view at all, lest he should stand between sinners and the full view of the crucified Saviour; who did not speculate concerning the gospel, or utter opinions regarding it, but in simple faithfulness declared the testimony of God; whose statements of truth were as lucid as they were profound; who knew too well what it was for a sinner to have to do with God to dare to heal slightly the wounded conscience; and yet who possessed so much of the spirit of Him "who breaks not the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax."

This feeling rapidly spread (notwithstanding the disadvantage under which he at first laboured of an imperfect acquaintance with the Gaelic language) to the country parishes around, the ministers of which generally shared in it with their flocks. "Mr. Charles Mackintosh, the young minister of Tain, is to preach here on such a day," said Dr. (then Mr.) M'Donald of Ferintosh to his people; "be sure to come all of you to hear him; for his words are with the unction of the Holy Ghost."

We are almost afraid to attempt to define in what the peculiar excellencies of his preaching, considered simply as preaching, consisted. "His peculiarity," writes a young friend[1] who never heard him till a much later period, when he preached in great bodily weakness, "was to sink all personal peculiarities in his sermons. There was in them a singular power, such as I have not found in sermons before or since, but which I can hardly characterize. His idea of preaching, as expressed to me, was 'exposition and application of the divine word;' and in the pulpit he persistently sought, as

[1] The Rev. Robert Sandeman, Glasgow.

few ever did, to hide his own power, that God's power alone might be revealed. As you listened to him, the man disappeared from your sight as completely as the Baptist from the view of the disciples when he pointed to the Lamb of God. And yet," adds the writer, "I knew of a gentleman of considerable acquirements, belonging to a different religious denomination, who attended his preaching simply for the beauty of his style." To this description we add only that the truth so simply stated was the truth as seen by a sound, penetrating, and comprehensive intellect from a point of view which few preachers so decidedly and habitually occupy. From the stand-point of a soul brought by deep experience into sympathy with the mind of God regarding sin, regarding Christ, regarding the Divine glory, regarding perishing men and tempted saints, he declared the counsel of God. And while no single peculiar feature perhaps could be pointed out in his preaching, and while he rarely gave expression to any single striking thought, his sermons, growing as by the simple touches of a master's hand, produced an altogether peculiar impression.

The more he was seen and known in private, the more was the influence of his Sabbath ministrations strengthened. Always and everywhere he was the servant of Christ,—too real to need to summon up the character, and never laying it aside. Not that he was oppressively solemn. The very contrary; for the peace, as well as the holy presence of God, now reigned habitually in his heart, and the happy cheerfulness of his natural temper communicated itself to all around. The smile of sweet benevolence on his fine features lighted up the room he entered, and with playful enjoyment

and pure quiet humour he could take his part in conversation on those lighter incidents of life with which the Creator's kindness has relieved the burden of its seriousness. But whether there was directly religious conversation or not, the interview never weakened, but confirmed the Sabbath impression. "I can say of him," writes the same young minister from whom we have already quoted, "what I can say of no man I ever knew so well, that I never heard him utter a word which he could wish to recall." His whole life preached the reality and the excellence of the walk of faith. "Of all the ministers with whom I had intercourse," says an intimate friend, "he was the most faultless, humble, loving, and holy man I ever met with." "The most *faultless, loving, holy*," and yet "the most *humble*,"—surely a remarkable combination; but how descriptive! "Charles Mackintosh is beyond criticism," said a man of lofty intellect as well as true piety, the late Rev. Alexander Stewart, of Cromarty, on one occasion when the peculiarities of different clergymen were talked of; "we will say nothing of him; he is the model minister, he is simply perfect." "There is not a worthier man than Charles Mackintosh in all Scotland," said Dr. Chalmers emphatically, on the casual mention of his name at a dinner-table. "I knew him from his early days," writes an eminent and venerable Christian physician;[1] "and I can truly say that in Christian simplicity, deep humility, heavenly-mindedness, and deep sound views of Scripture I never met with any person to be compared to him. He was indeed a living epistle of Christ, much qualified by his deportment as well as his minis-

[1] Dr. Rainy, Professor of Forensic Medicine in the University of Glasgow.

trations to sustain and cheer on those who were weaker and less advanced." And yet the man whose character produced such an impression of holy faultlessness on his own people, on his fellow-ministers, and on all who knew him, was the man who, in his prayers, his preaching, his whole life, was seen to lie in deepest abasement before God under a sense of the exceeding evil of sin, and of his own personal sinfulness. The effect of this contrast on all but the most flippant or hardened was to produce a deep and often new impression of the holiness of that God in whose light such a man beheld himself so utterly vile. And this we believe to have been one of the most powerful elements of his ministry, adding indescribable weight to his proclamations of the gospel of grace.

The motives and the strength of his ministry grew out of his inner life. "May this be a good, good Saturday to you," he wrote to a dear friend a few months before his death, when he had been finally laid aside from active work; "many a tired happy Saturday have I had; not always happy—and yet, better the heavy burden, and the sense of utter unfitness and inability, than the want of feeling of the greatness and preciousness of the work." "It is," he once said to a young candidate for the ministry to whom he wished to be useful, "when I am enabled in any measure to realize the glory of God as the end, that I obtain light on the subject I am studying for the pulpit." "No one who was with him," says his nearest relative, "could fail to see that his pulpit preparation was steeped in prayer." But not his pulpit preparation only. "He never," is the further testimony of her who had the best opportunities of knowing, "he never knelt in prayer without a period

longer or shorter of solemn meditation or self-recollection; and if he had but a few minutes' time to give to the duty, the greater part of it was spent in this preparation of the heart. . . . Another thing which struck me was his constant study of the Word; I do not mean with a view to his pulpit preparations, but for the nourishment of his own soul. Truly it was the man of his counsel, and the joy and rejoicing of his heart."

On his father's death in 1831 he became sole pastor of the large bi-lingual parish. The charge of it devolved on him just when its population was greatest (it has since declined), and at that stage of its history when the almost equal prevalence of its two languages entailed the greatest amount of ministerial work. The private and public labours he felt himself constrained to undertake were such as would have severely taxed even a strong man performing them, not *ex officio* merely, but *ex conscientia officii;* much more one who, accounting it (as he used to express himself) "high presumption to speak in Christ's name without premeditation," or "to offer to the Lord that which cost him nothing," yet carried on his work amid almost constant suffering and weakness. "Though oppressed," writes a life-long intimate friend,[1] "with bodily illness that would have kept most others confined to their rooms, he ever struggled on; and when I think of it, I often marvel how he was able to appear at all in the pulpit, or to engage in pastoral work. His doing so only showed the more his concern for souls, especially for those committed to his charge." More than once indeed, during his ministry in Tain, he was forced to pause in the midst of the work

[1] The Rev. Gustavus Aird, of Creich.

he delighted in, and, committing his parish to a carefully-selected assistant, to seek restoration at a distance; but from these enforced absences he returned to his flock, fraught with the blessing of the gospel of Christ, to resume his labours with redoubled energy—literally filling his days with prayerful work.

Such a life and ministry could not be unfruitful. "*Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*"[1] His work was begun under the mingled encouragements and discouragements consequent on his having been preceded in the field he was to occupy by such a labourer as his father. He had, when in the Isle of Skye, contrasted the eager attention of the congregations, and the warmth and freshness and simplicity of faith of the recent converts there, with the comparative listlessness of a people that had been long familiar with the richest exhibitions of gospel truth. "The people of Skye," his father wrote in reply to his remark, "have not grieved the Spirit of God like those of Easter Ross." Nevertheless, his Ross-shire ministry was largely and variously blessed—in a more quiet way for the most part, but also more conspicuously at one period amid the excitement of a great awakening. This remarkable event took place in the year 1840, soon after the revivals in Kilsyth, Dundee, Perth, and elsewhere, and was part of a very general movement in Ross-shire. During the previous year, Mr. Mackintosh had been much pressed under a sense of the apparent deadness of his people. He took counsel with the elders of the parish; his prayers and theirs for the outpouring of the Spirit became very

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 16.

importunate; general prayer-meetings became more numerous and more largely attended; and a deeper seriousness manifestly pervaded the congregation. During the communion season the smouldering fire burst into a flame. At a Gaelic service on Monday evening, at which a large number of persons from many parishes were present, Dr. (then Mr.) M'Donald of Ferintosh preached on Luke xiii. 24. Just after he had made one of the freest offers of salvation to sinners, and had uttered the words, "Will you not close with Christ?" a heartrending cry arose from every part of the densely crowded church. There had been many silent weepers before; but now the preacher's voice was drowned, so that he was forced to pause, and announce a psalm to be sung. There had been some movement in the neighbouring parish of Tarbat the week previous; but now it assumed much greater proportions, and spread through a wide district. Neither by Mr. M'Donald, Mr. Mackintosh, nor any other judicious minister were the external manifestations encouraged; indeed they were sometimes greatest under sermons that contained not a single word fitted to alarm. But they did not think it warrantable authoritatively to suppress them. The excitement continued during the whole summer and autumn. In the following year, Dr. Mackintosh gave his judgment regarding the movement, at the request of the Presbytery of Aberdeen, in a document from which we make a few extracts :—

"What I believe to be a genuine revival of religion,—the work of the Spirit of God,—has taken place during the past year, to a considerable extent, in this parish and district. . . . The preaching of the Word is the grand means which has been employed and blessed.

There seemed at the same time, previous to the commencement of the work, to have been a more than ordinary measure of the spirit of prayer given to ministers and Christians, and a more than ordinary thirst for such a manifestation of Divine power. . . . A considerable number of the young throughout the district appear to be in a very hopeful way. . . . Some of these were previously of such a description that by many they would be called irreclaimable. . . . Hitherto their conduct has been most consistent. . . . In so far as the influence of the revival has extended here, most blessed results have accompanied it—the destruction of the works of the flesh, and the advancement of that kingdom which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. . . . There was at first a good deal of outward excitement on some occasions under the word, but this gradually diminished. . . . The experience which I have had of the revival of religion, though limited and partial, is such as would lead me to long for its continuance, and to pant for its return, as bringing with it the blessed results for which a minister of Christ would desire to live and to die—the conversion of sinners, and the increasing consolation and edification of saints. There is a peculiar amount of labour and anxiety which attends such a season; but there is also a peculiar pleasure and unwearied strength for the discharge of duty." (We must explain that, at the time when these words were written, he, by himself or with assistance, was holding four Sabbath services, besides fulfilling all the other work which a revival season in so large a parish entailed.) Sixteen years after, when addressing his congregation at Dunoon on the subject of the Irish revivals, which he had gone

to witness, and which he described with much joy and hopefulness, he referred to this revival in Ross-shire in a way that showed he had not changed his mind regarding it, declaring it emphatically to have been "a real work of God."

We have reason to believe that at this time he had the happiness of gathering much of the harvest of the precious seed which he had, often with tears, been sowing during his previous ministry, and he continued to gather that harvest for years following. Indeed the chief fruits, all through his ministry, were gathered in a quiet and comparatively unnoticed way. His was not the preaching that naturally led to superficial and flaring profession. But many souls—who can tell how many?—belonging to his own and other parishes, were solemnized and impressed under it; many were made to weep in secret places for their sins; many broken hearts were healed; to many Christ was made precious; and many fainting believers were strengthened and edified. There were souls wounded in other parishes that came to his ministry for healing; there were others who, having elsewhere received Christ, came to be fed with the finest of the wheat. When, years after he had left the North, he returned to his old people for a week, spiritual children gathered round him from all the neighbourhood, weeping tears of affection to see his face and hear his voice once more.

When the great historical event of the Disruption of the Church of Scotland occurred in 1843, the admiring fondness with which Charles Mackintosh had been regarded from the very first had already deepened into love, reverence, and unbounded confidence. It was the happiness of the Northern Highlands that all of their

ministers whom they esteemed as men of God took their stand in that crisis for the freedom of the Church of Christ; so that, though the emoluments of State establishment were forfeited, though the manses were left, and though the old edifices in which their fathers had met to worship were exchanged for temporary wooden sheds or for the open vault of heaven, the local kirk-sessions, presbyteries, and synods met just as before,—their membership almost unchanged; and the old ministers preached to the old congregations, and the same crowds assembled at the great communion gatherings, to listen to the same eminent servants of Christ preaching the same gospel, and to partake of or to witness the same divine feast of love. The vessel of the Church had simply passed out of the harbour of State protection into the open sea; but everything that was essential to the Church of Christ remained, and the people knew and felt this. It is simply impossible to estimate the magnitude of the moral disaster that would have fallen on that district had the ministers they revered as the God-appointed shepherds of their souls failed in the day of trial. It was their happiness that those ministers did not do so. That a few whom the people never trusted remained in the old buildings was nothing; the desertion of their ministry simply became more complete, and the way was thereby opened for the freer entrance into their parishes of evangelical men—the old unity of the Church of the Highlands remaining almost everywhere substantially unbroken.

Dr. Mackintosh had long foreseen what was coming, and made up his mind to the issue. With his brethren, he had a strong persuasion of the value of a rightly-constituted establishment, and he had known its special

importance in the Highlands. But the time had come when an unbelieving world must be taught the lesson that there is such a thing as Christian conscience, and when the Churches of the Reformation must be taught that no external advantages can justify the surrender of their freedom to obey all the known will of their Divine Lord. He might have said, indeed, what the late Dr. Robert Gordon, of Edinburgh (a man whom in weight of Christian character he much resembled), did say in reply to a brother who thought the Church should not voluntarily leave her State connection, but wait until forced out:—"I do it most unwillingly: I am compelled by a force far more terrible to me than the baton of the constable or the musket of the soldier; I am compelled by my *conscience* to do it." But like the same and other honoured men, he could also have testified that in such a compulsion, amid all attendant sufferings or losses, there is exceeding peace and joy. A son of one of his elders, who was but a little boy in that eventful year, and could understand little of what was about to occur, has given us a graphic account of the effect produced on his youthful mind by the minister's demeanour on the morning when tidings came that the State had declared its ultimatum, which made disruption inevitable:—"One morning, in the spring of 1843, I jumped early out of bed, for my head was full of marbles and pegtops, and a dozen or so of games before breakfast has its attractions for a schoolboy. To my astonishment I found my father down before me; nay, he had evidently been there for some time, for the moment I appeared he folded up the newspaper in which he had been so unseasonably engaged, and, with a break in his voice indicating an emotion that was

quite unaccountable to me, he asked me to take it at once to the manse, with his compliments to the minister. My visit was shorter than I anticipated; for I had scarcely got out of the sunshine into the manse evergreens when I found the minister in the porch, and when I offered him the newspaper, he showed me that he had already got the *Times* by some unusual express, and as he spoke, he patted my head and smiled; but such a smile!—so full of radiant kindliness! I was confounded; and as I went back between the hedges the birds sang unheeded, while I thought what could have come over the minister. Had anybody left him a fortune? Or had he met one of the Shining Ones walking among the hollies in that early dawn? And it was not for some weeks that I found out that this was what had happened—the newspaper that morning had brought him the vote of the House of Commons, finally refusing an inquiry into the affairs of the Scottish Church, and so making it certain that within a few weeks he would leave for ever the home at the door of which I saw him, in which his father had dwelt before him, and which he now would have to leave, without stipend, and not knowing what was before him. Of course he came out." And when the day of actual leaving came, he wrote, amid the usually naked entries in his "Journal of Employment of Time," these words:—

"1843, *May 18th.*—A memorable day—for Scotland; separated, with all my heart, from the State."

"He seemed," said a Christian lady,—an intimate friend,—"to feel as if he were treading on air."

His people accompanied him out with very few exceptions. They met with him in a wooden building hurriedly erected for temporary use, even the magistrates of

the town, preceded by their red-coated, halbert-armed officers, walking in procession, and taking their place of honour in the Free, as they had been wont to do in the Established Church. And so, amid a great external change, the work of Christ went on in his parish as before.

Things having gradually settled down in their new position, he was married, in August 1847, to Annie, second daughter of Robert Brown, Esq., Fairlie, Ayrshire, and by the mother's side grand-daughter of the Rev. George Rainy, the former much esteemed minister of Creich, in Sutherlandshire. Seven children were given to them, of whom six survive.

The Disruption was a necessity of conscience, which the providence of the Church's Head had made inevitable, and out of which He has in various ways brought unthought-of good. Yet it was not unattended with evils, some of these more felt in the South, others far more in the Highlands. One of these was that the excitement and labours, as well as the anxieties and hardships consequent on the great change of circumstances, brought premature age on many of the most devoted ministers, cutting some of them off in the prime of life, and forcing others to remove from loved and loving flocks to lighter spheres of work. Dr. Mackintosh had long before felt the charge of Tain too great for a single minister; for example, he felt it necessary, on account of the two languages, to supply his people with three distinct public services every Sabbath—for a year or so after the revival of 1840, actually four—and when he failed to obtain regular or occasional assistance, as he not seldom did, these all devolved upon himself. He had hoped, during the

Church Extension movement, to obtain a permanent colleague, but to this expectation the Disruption put an end. He had also taken into serious consideration a call to a smaller parish, but had declined it, as he afterwards did a private invitation to Edinburgh, on the ground of attachment to his people, whom he wished never to leave.[1] But before 1854 he fell again into a very weak state of health, the first symptoms appearing of the disease which afterwards brought his life to an end. He was induced therefore, to the deep grief of his people and of the whole North, to accept a call to a lighter charge on the milder West Coast—that of Dunoon, in Argyleshire, where he ministered until his death. His translation is believed to have been the means of prolonging his valuable life for years, and if not of restoring him to the vigour of his earlier ministry, yet of securing a measure of strength that enabled him, though not without interruptions, to labour successfully for Christ in his new sphere. "His success in Dunoon," says a minister who was his assistant there for a year and a half, "though impaired by ill health, was great and manifest. Many people, both young and old, spoke of him as a spiritual father. In going about among the congregation, I found that he was not only respected, but reverenced—beyond any minister I ever knew—by all, and actually worshipped by some."

In approaching the close of his public career, we must not omit reference to what from the beginning to the end of it was one of his most remarkable character-

[1] His attached friend, Dr. James Buchanan (afterwards Divinity Professor), was very desirous he should make this latter change. He persuaded him subsequently to accept the offered degree of D.D.

istics—his power of personal influence. Many experienced this. It was not the commonplace power of mere strength over weakness; the weak indeed felt it, but it was frequently felt most of all by men of greatest mental strength. It was the power of high character, of warm, deep sympathy, of clear intellect and admirably balanced judgment, all combined, and combined too with the constant sense of the Divine presence which made that holy presence be felt wherever *he* was. Then there was the depth and firmness of his convictions. The undecided or unstable, tossed on the waves of uncertainty, or driven to and fro by the fickle winds, found rest in anchoring themselves to this noble ship that seemed to float immoveably on the waters—and yet, not immoveably, for one of the elements of his influence (over young men especially) was just the perception they sooner or later came to have, that, with all its steadfastness, his was essentially a progressive mind, steadily borne by the breeze of heaven on its appointed course. So it came to pass that he was pre-eminently fitted to mould the minds and character of students, and to lay the foundations of their future usefulness in the ministry of the gospel. One thus moulded, a very useful and beloved minister, has in the midst of his days been taken to his rest while this volume was in preparation, —the Rev. Hugh Cobban, of Braemar; who may be said to have been brought up at Dr. Mackintosh's knee in Tain, and who, but for his influence and encouragement, would probably never have entered a pulpit. The reminiscences of a second minister, still living, who has kindly permitted us to quote them, have a special interest, as showing the impression made by Dr. Mack-

intosh's character and preaching in his later days, on a cultivated mind brought up in another locality and amid wholly different associations. "When I became his assistant at Dunoon," writes Mr. Sandeman, "I at first failed to appreciate his intellect. The only sermon before he left for the Continent, though full of evangelical truth and feeling, seemed to lack intellectual pith. He did not philosophize; he did not discuss; he did not illustrate, and, blind with the blindness of a student, I could not then see intellect in a statement—a bare statement of Scripture truth, such as he always sought to give. . . . On his return to Scotland, in the summer of 1861, I very soon began to perceive and feel in his sermons a singular power such as I have not found in sermons before or since. . . . God never spoke more powerfully to my soul by any than by him. The longer I listened to him, the more was I impressed. I found it increasingly difficult to preach alongside of him. I began to loathe my own sermons. I tried to preach in his way, and could not—I would not preach in my own way. The result was that, had I not, with deep regret, left Dunoon, I should have been completely silenced—for the time at all events. In fact, the strength of his personality, which I failed at first to see, had overpowered me. I unconsciously surrendered my independence to him. I found myself, to my surprise, at last, among his most abject worshippers. I resolved with much reluctance to leave him. He remained an overawing personality, an idol, to me for several years; and now that I have escaped the bondage of idolatry, I think of him always with reverence and love, as my good, kind, invaluable master, who has taught me more of the highest things than I can ever tell."

He never coveted prominence in ecclesiastical assemblies, and kept back even when others would have pushed him forward; but he carefully studied public questions, and, after satisfying himself of the principles they involved, took his stand with openness and decision. During the "Voluntary" controversy, he preached and published a sermon in defence of the principle of Church Establishments. Yet at the Disruption, as we have seen, he renounced the benefits of establishment, when he judged that these could no longer be retained in consistency with the Church's freedom. And, towards the close of his life, he publicly declared his conviction that the maintenance of the Establishment principle was no sufficient reason against ecclesiastical union with Christians who did not hold it. This volume shows the importance he attached to the doctrine of particular redemption; but not the less did he declare his willingness to unite with Christians who, when urging the reality of the free gospel offer to sinners, expressed themselves in terms from which a severe logic might think itself able to deduce inferences of doubtful consistency with the particular redemption which he believed them honestly to hold.

Of his inward experience during his years of active labour we know little. The special trial he had all along to contend with in his spiritual life seems to have been that depression of spirits (or *melancholy*, as his father called it), which returned occasionally when his bodily health sank very low, giving rise to feelings of despondency which it required all the power of divine faith to overcome. This is a kind of trial which those who have not experienced it are unable to understand,

and find it difficult to sympathize with. It is comparatively easy to rejoice in hope when the animal spirits are elastic, and no inward enemy assails. To hope and believe *against feeling*, after the pattern of Him who cried, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" is perhaps the highest exercise of faith. "He was ill in the summer of 1860," writes his widow; "too ill to hear more than a verse or two of the Bible at a time. His prayers at our little morning and evening worship I shall never forget. He lay on his back on the sofa, and seemed to forget or overlook my presence. He took a very low place before God, but oh how near! I never heard before or since such communing with the Father of Spirits; such a breathing out of the Spirit of adoption."—"That was the Marrow doctrine you gave us to-day," said a friend after hearing him preach on Romans v. 1,—"peace by direct faith." "I will tell you," was his reply, "when I do not get peace by direct faith, very often I cannot get it any other way."—"I thought," he wrote at another time, "I saw in a new light the precious use to be made of the truth that Jesus has judged and condemned Satan; viz., that while feeling the working of the poison of the old serpent in my heart, and feeling that to sanctify my soul is as impossible to me as to create a world, I am warranted and invited to give the Redeemer the whole work to do, as one who is commissioned to do it, who is exalted to do it, who delights to do it. I thought I saw something of the delight that the Redeemer takes in casting Satan out of a sinner's heart, and in carrying on, in the conflict with the enemy, the work of sanctification. Oh what a glory is there in the Cross, did we but behold it! Let us seek to have our eye fixed there!"

In the spring of 1868 his health utterly broke down, and he was finally laid aside from work. In the beginning of winter he repaired, accompanied by his family, and soon followed by his affectionate brother, to Pau, in the south of France; but, amid severe bodily suffering, he rapidly sank, and, on the 24th November, breathed his last. It was the wish of the holy Archbishop Usher to die praying "God be merciful to me a sinner." To the loving relatives who ministered to Dr. Charles Mackintosh in his last days, it was evident that, as the glory of the Divine holiness filled his mind more and more, he lay lower and lower before God as the chief of sinners. There was much physical depression, but faith clung to the Saviour with reverential adoring hope. "My mind is very confused," he said to his brother-in-law, under the distressing sense of mental wandering, a few days before his death, "but there is no enchantment against Jacob, nor any divination against Israel; *that is to say*, the confusion of my mind cannot separate my soul from God." Amid his sufferings, the announcement that death was at hand elevated and calmed him. He took leave of his family one by one with affectionate solemn charges suitable to each; a sweet expression of peace and trust lighted up his countenance as the end drew near, till insensibility came on, from which he awoke only for a few moments, to look an adieu to his beloved wife, and so fell gently asleep in the Lord.

SERMONS AND FRAGMENTS.

FIRST DIVISION.

GOD'S WONDROUS MERCY.

THE first three Sermons were preached in 1830. The occasion was that mentioned at page 44. They were introduced with the following words:—

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—In the immeasurable forbearance and sparing mercy of God, I have been permitted to return to you, and to appear before you as one who bears the honoured name of Christ's ambassador. Though sorely chastened by the Lord, I have not been given over to death: and whatever may be His future purposes regarding me, for the present it is my privilege to be called to declare unto you the gospel of His grace. His ministers are required to preach not themselves but Christ Jesus the Lord. And I would therefore desire, by His help, and in dependence upon His grace, to direct your thoughts to this passage, in which the reality and preciousness of the gospel which we preach are declared to us."

SERMON I.

GOD'S MERCY REAL AND INFINITE.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."—ISA. LV. 8, 9.

THESE words refer to God's ways and thoughts in redemption. The proposition is true indeed in the widest sense; all God's ways and thoughts are infinitely higher than ours; but it is here especially applied to the matter of pardon. The preceding verse contained that gracious command, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." But this assurance of mercy and pardon as ready to greet the penitent, being in itself so wondrous, and so contrary to all that the consciousness of guilt leads the awakened sinner to expect, the Lord, to encourage him to receive the truth, follows up His invitation with the words, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways."

Some persons may think that there is nothing in this very difficult to compass, and that there is no truth easier of reception than that the Lord is gracious. They have always believed the mercy of God; they hope in it also, and they find it pleasant to do so. But what is the secret

of the ease with which they believe this great truth? It is that they have never felt the wound or sting of sin; they have never been brought as justly condemned criminals to God's bar. And what must be thought of their faith in the divine forgiveness? That it is all a dream. They trust in a mercy which has no existence—a mercy which brings them no true sweetness now, and which will leave them in the end the helpless and naked victims of insulted justice. If we would discover a true believer in the Divine mercy, we must go, not to the whole-hearted, who can speak of it unfeelingly, and therefore without knowing what it is, but to the poor publican who cries out, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He who has felt the wound of sin hears the law declare, "The soul that sinneth it shall die," and conscience sets its seal to his condemnation. He hears his sins cry aloud for vengeance. He sees all the attributes of God—His holiness, justice, and truth—demanding his punishment. Then mountains rise between him and the mercy he once found it so easy to believe. He looks within, and sees no cause why vengeance should be delayed; he looks above him, and sees but one dark thunder-cloud of wrath. What remains but that he say, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, even shouldst thou consume me." While in this helpless, and, to his own apprehension, all but hopeless condition, the still small voice from Mount Zion says, "Return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon thee." No wonder though he should be unable to receive so blessed a truth. "Mercy, mercy for *me!*" he cries; "no, that cannot be." And it is a solemn and melancholy truth that it is very possible thus to converse with God's justice, and to tremble before it, without arriving at a soul-humbling and tranquillizing view of His mercy. Indeed without the Holy Spirit's agency in giving him the eyes of faith, he could never see

it. Nay, even with this spiritual sight, the truth must be brought close to him by the Word to enable poor trembling faith to apprehend it; and this is why God says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." It is as if He had said, "If my thoughts *were* as your thoughts, vain indeed would be all expectation of forgiveness; but my thoughts are infinitely higher than yours; therefore return unto me, and I will have mercy."

But the words seem intended not only to help the convinced and consciously self-destroyed sinner to see that there is mercy in God, but that there is mercy enough and pardon enough even for him. There are two obstacles that hinder his resting in God's mercy, even when he may have begun dimly to discern this shining star in the constellation of the Divine perfections. The first is the view which he entertains of the magnitude of his sins; and the second the unworthy views which he entertains of God. He thinks of his sins as being too great even for mercy to pardon, and he thinks of God's mercy as not being great enough to cover his sins. He can never indeed see his sins in all their magnitude; so that it is evident that the true root of his fears lies in his inadequate views of the Divine mercy. His eyes have been opened to see in some measure the magnitude of the one, but he sees not the magnitude of the other. The Lord condescends here to give the poor trembling sinner a glass through which the real character of His mercy can be discovered, and to bring him to the proper point of view from which to contemplate it. It is as if He had said, "What wonder should your sense of sin and your fear of wrath overpower you, when you think of my mercy as of something you can measure; when you think you see its length and breadth, and that you have sounded and reached its bottom? You think of me as of yourself; and is this to honour me? But drop your measuring line, and think

of me as God. For, hear this, O sinner! as the heavens are higher than the earth, so is my mercy above all your thoughts of it." Then the sinner sees mercy beaming through the cloud even for him. When he has once discovered that God's mercy has no bottom, that it is an ocean without a shore, a depth not to be fathomed, he enjoys a rest and a delight that pass expression. He bring his own boundless and fathomless sins side by side with God's infinite and fathomless mercy, turning his gaze from the one to the other; and while sweetly reposing on the bosom of mercy, he yields the God of grace the glory of this attribute in the deep humiliation, the heart-contrition, the ingenuous repentance, the holy hatred of sin, and the ardent breathings after conformity to the Divine image that necessarily accompany this blessed posture of soul. But this is an eminence which many seem to view only at a distance; they are still a "little flock" who with David truly "hope in God's mercy."

Such is the general meaning of the text. To illustrate it further, we will now consider what the mercy of God has done for sinners in overcoming the obstacles that stood in the way of it, and in securing the bestowment of pardon.

If we have been taught in any measure to regard sin as God regards it, let us endeavour to fix our minds upon it in connection with His character as a holy Sovereign and righteous moral Governor. He regards sin with hatred and abhorrence. It is an arraignment of His excellence, a contempt of His authority, a direct insult to His majesty, a conspiracy against His being. Let us remember also that as the Sovereign of the Universe He is clothed with power, not only to take vengeance on his enemies, but to reflect new lustre on His throne and government by their destruction. When we bear this in mind, and then con-

sider that, notwithstanding all this, mercy towards sinners of Adam's race found a place in the heart of God, we may see how truly infinite that mercy is; that His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts.

But all this is as nothing when compared with the cost (if we may so speak) of forgiveness, with God's overcoming the view of the humiliation and death of His Son! "He spared not His own Son." The full meaning of these words the redeemed through eternity will be ever pressing forward to know. So high were the claims of justice, so extensive the demands of the law, that no other than God's own Son could answer or satisfy them so as to make way for the exercise of mercy, and He too in no other manner than by submitting to humiliation and sufferings, the very imagination of which, unless revealed by God himself, could never have been entertained by any of His creatures. Before a door of mercy could be opened, it behoved God the Father to give up His only-begotten Son, who dwelt in His bosom from eternity, to appear in our rebellious world in the form of a servant; it behoved the Son to make Himself of no reputation, to tabernacle in a world that lay under the curse, to submit to the contradiction of sinners whom He came to save, and of devils whom He held in subjection, to be reviled, persecuted, buffeted, crucified by those whom in a moment the fires of His wrath could have consumed. And this were comparatively nothing. But it behoved the Father himself to stretch out His hand against Him. He put *Him* to grief in whom His soul delighted. He spared him not; and though in agony and desertion His cries pierced the Father's ear, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" yet the sword continued to smite until the Sufferer said, "It is finished!" Oh, who can tell the yearnings of the Father's heart over His beloved Son? His overleaping the vileness of the sinner was nothing com-

pared with His overleaping the view of the humiliation of His divine Son. And this obstacle stood right across the only way of mercy. But the mercy of God, like an impetuous, resistless stream, broke through every obstacle that it might overflow our world.

Let us, with all these things before our minds, say whether we have not here shown to us the reality of the Divine mercy. If after all this we question it or fail to fall prostrate before its exhibition, we slander and malign God in that of which He is most jealous; we rob Him of His choicest jewel—His grace; and nothing remains but that insulted mercy should give a keener edge and a swifter descent to the stroke of justice. But oh! were we blessed with but a faint perception of our own inexpressible vileness—for a full view of it we never can obtain—and with a faint perception of the immeasurable preciousness of "Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person," the thought that Christ should have died for us would so humble, so dissolve, and so astonish us that we could find no vent nor refuge for our feelings but in God's own words, "Thy thoughts are not our thoughts, nor thy ways our ways."

Here further we may learn to see that the mercy of God is such that no sinner can perish for want of a sufficiency of mercy. Unless we can say that we have looked into the heart of God and seen the yearnings of the Father's heart over His Son, and unless we can measure Christ's worth and the worth of His sufferings, we cannot limit the Divine mercy. It is infinite. And if it is infinite, is it not enough for you, however great your sins? It is infinite, and what more can you want? None ever perished for want of mercy. Many have perished for despising mercy, many for rejecting mercy; many have perished for sinning because mercy abounds;

but none ever perished because there was not enough of mercy. If there is any one whose mouth is shut before a holy God, to him we bring the good news that there is mercy for him in the outstretched hand of God himself, who delights to have it received, and who is glorified in bestowing it.

The great duty and business then of the minister of the gospel is to proclaim the mercy of God, the wondrous truth that "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life;" to proclaim it that sinners may believe and be saved; may repent and bring forth fruits meet for repentance; may believe and be moved by the belief to glorify God in their body and in their spirit which are God's. Oh how joyfully would we proclaim this gospel were we only enabled to apprehend the love and the grace wrapped up in it; did we apprehend our own personal interest in it, and the secure basis provided by it for the hopes of the chief of sinners! How admiringly would we proclaim it, did we but perceive the infinitude of the mercy displayed in it, and of the love which passeth knowledge! And how earnestly and tenderly and faithfully would we press its reception upon you, did we realize the preciousness of your souls, and the fearfulness of the wrath that abides upon the sinner; did we but travail in birth for you till Christ be formed in you; were we but constrained and pressed by the love of Christ and by a sense of the inevitable and inconceivable anguish that impends on those who neglect so great salvation! And oh! how would your hearts leap to receive it, did you but know and feel your own condition as sinners, and did you but apprehend this gospel as coming not from a poor brother worm, but from the great Majesty of heaven, whose avenging law has been hot in pursuit of you!

But, alas! how possible is it for us to preach this gospel coldly. And, oh, with what a miserable welcome does it often meet from the perishing, forlorn souls to whom it is proclaimed!

If that which gave comfort to one of the holiest saints on earth in the near approach of death—"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief"—touches no sympathetic chord in your breast; if these blessed words are words of indifference to you—if you feel no personal interest in them—we know why it is so, and we are called to declare it unto you. It is because you are still dead in trespasses and sins, so that the very sense of your condition has yet to be discovered to you. We know too what is the necessary tendency, what the fearful issue of such security. It is death eternal.

Oh then awake to a sense of your condition! "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Awake, ye that live without God and Christ in the world. Awake, ye that live as if this world were your home. Awake, ye that go about to establish your own righteousness. God's avenging law is in pursuit of you, and, if it find you without the covert of the Redeemer's blood, your future misery is sure. Let the world say what it will, unless this blessed book be a fiction, the world "lieth in the wicked one," and is devoted to destruction. Let the world say what it will of the mercy of God and of the uselessness of fear and anxiety in regard to an eternal state, sooner or later the pride of our hearts must be subdued, and we prostrated at God's feet. Better surely to be so when He is on the throne of grace, and the royal hand of mercy will raise us up, than to be shivered by the rod of iron.

The song of the redeemed in heaven is "to Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood;" and if you would ever join that blessed throng, you must learn something of the wonders of redemption now.

SERMON II.

MERCY ABUNDANTLY PARDONING.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."—ISA. LV. 8, 9.

THE mercy of God and the righteousness of Christ are two parallel truths; they run side by side along the whole gospel scheme. And this must ever be kept in view. Thus, the mercy of God is infinite; it is a divine attribute, and it is necessarily infinite. And the righteousness of Christ is infinite; it is the righteousness of God-man, and therefore it is so. And they can never be separated. The mercy of God would never have been manifested without the righteousness of Christ, and the righteousness of Christ would not have been wrought out but for the mercy of God. Mercy originated the plan of redemption; righteousness opened up a channel through which mercy flowed to mankind; and thus "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life." And they must never be separated in our contemplations. We must never think of the mercy of God apart from the righteousness of Christ; and we must never think of this righteousness without thinking of the guilt, the criminality, and the sins which it covers. If we think we know the mercy of God without the righteousness of Christ, we deceive ourselves; and we

must never think of the righteousness of Christ as if it made us independent of mercy; it only puts us into a situation in which we may receive mercy. Let us remember this, while we proceed to consider the nature and properties of the Divine mercy and forgiveness.

1. God pardons *freely.*

In our dealings with our fellow-creatures we do not expect to receive favours without giving some equivalent for them; least of all at the hands of those whom we have deeply injured. We should consider the prince as most merciful who issued out his proclamation of pardon to the subjects who had conspired against his throne and being, on condition of their proving their returned loyalty by some actions that implied a more than ordinary measure of courage and patient exertion. It is contrary to all our preconceived notions to expect anything from God *freely.* This indeed implies a fearful ignorance of His character and of our own dependence upon Him. But the workings of our mind, when we come to deal with Him about pardon and reconciliation, prove that it is so. Rebels and beggars though we be, we must bring some price with us. We come to Him with our prayers, our many duties, our fears and doubts, our tears and groans, and with this wretched and polluted compound would we barter with the Most High for the pardon purchased by the blood of His Son. Oh! what a wonder that the impious and insulting offer, which is as a smoke in Jehovah's nostrils, does not bring down fire from heaven to consume the offerer with his offering! And if the vanity and guilt of such a proposal are revealed to us, oh, how do we blush before Him, and how naturally do we feel as if we were for ever shut out from mercy!

But God's ways are not our ways. Having cast up the royal road of mercy in the bruising and death of His Son,

He has enthroned Himself as the God of grace, taken into His hands the golden sceptre, thrown wide open His palace gates, and sent forth His heralds to proclaim that He bestows pardon freely on all who will receive it from Him on His throne. He pardons "for his own name's sake." This peculiar honour He has secured for Himself by the delivering up freely of His own Son, whose obedience and death have so firmly stablished and so deeply fixed the foundations of the Father's throne in justice and righteousness, that His law is honoured when the sinner is pardoned. This is God's glory as the Sovereign of the universe, that He gives forth pardon freely and liberally, irrespective of the character of its objects, and yet that His holiness and majesty and rectitude are glorified in its bestowment. And thus has He secured a sure basis for the hopes of self-condemned rebels; a basis on which, when the soul rests, it feels itself sure as God's truth and throne. It is not for our sakes, for our doing's sake, that He pardons us. It is not for the sake of anything done by us; no, nor for the sake of anything wrought in us by His Spirit; but it is for His own name's sake. Are you poor? Are you naked? Are you self-condemned before Him? Are your sins as scarlet and as crimson? Are you the very chiefest of sinners? Still the only question is, Will you have pardon from God's royal hand as His free gift? He gives it for His own name's sake; He gives it freely. Oh, then, seek to get your soul within the compass of this blessed truth, and you will see yourself in the fortified city!

2. God pardons *fully*. When He pardons one sin, He pardons every sin.

We are ready to suppose, in approaching Him, that were this or that number taken from the black catalogue, or did not this or that horrid and peculiar sin stand in the

way, mercy might possibly reach us. But here we see such heinousness, there such abominations and malignity, that we dare not entertain the hope. It is necessary to be thus burdened on account of our sins, to feel their gall and wormwood; it is essential that the remembrance of our evil ways, and of our doings that were not good, be as a sting in the conscience and as a fire in the soul, consuming self-righteousness; and it is natural that some sins, distinguished by peculiarly aggravated circumstances of enormity, should stand out vividly before us, interposing like mountains their huge heads between us and forgiveness. But though this perception and feeling be essential to our welcoming pardon, and though the Holy Spirit subjects the soul to this awful discipline in its attempted approach unto God, still neither the greatness of any one sin, nor the blackness of the catalogue of sins of any one sinner, interposes a barrier to the overflowings of mercy. The question still on which our eternity rests, is not, Is there a sufficiency of mercy? but, Will we be debtors to infinite mercy? As the least comparatively of all our sins (though no sin is in itself little or trivial) would for ever shut us out from God's presence if His ways were our ways, or His thoughts our thoughts, so His ways and thoughts being infinitely higher than our ways and thoughts, the most heinous sin, at the touch of mercy, melts like snow before the sun. There is no sin too great for God's mercy to pardon and Christ's righteousness to cover. Were it otherwise, the basis of our hopes would be a quicksand and not a rock. But it is not thus God has prepared peace for us. The basis on which we trust for the forgiveness alike of our wandering thoughts in prayer and of the blackest sin that condemns us before God, is one and the same—the infinite mercy of God resting for its exercise in the infinite worth of His dear Son's atonement.

And in pardoning one sin, God pardons all. He does not say, This I forgive thee, but that other I cannot blot out, but must leave recorded against thee. As He dispenses pardon, so He dispenses it in a manner worthy of the gift and the Giver; giving it freely, He gives it also fully. Whether they be the sins of ten, or twenty, or fifty, or seventy years, He takes the heap of the believer's sins, not leaving one behind, and casts it all into the depths of the sea.

3. God pardons *heartily.*

Oh! how false and unworthy our natural views of God! We regard Him as a jealous and cruel tyrant—Him who follows us day after day with His forbearance, unwilling that we should perish. If our consciences are awakened from their stupor, and our sins are placed in our view, His wrath drinks up our spirits—and it cannot fail to do so when we realize it as *abiding* on us; but were we to be left in this situation, our desperately wicked hearts would never own His glory and His excellence in punishing sin. And even if, through the omnipotent and all-overcoming influence of the Holy Spirit, the soul is prostrated before Him, dumb and self-destroyed in its own experience, still, were it left in this posture, how utterly would it fail of arriving at a knowledge of God's graciousness! We are ready to suppose that God is much more ready to punish than to pardon; we think if we shall ever obtain pardon, that it must be extorted from Him; that He gives it grudgingly, preferring rather to use the sword of vengeance than to stretch forth the sceptre of mercy. Oh! do we not often come before Him as if we were to steal forgiveness from Him, instead of to honour Him in its acceptance! How many are there who view Him as made placable and merciful by the sacrifice and atonement of His Son! And yet we know nothing of His true character till we see the

spring of mercy in His heart gushing forth in the gift of His Son, and now ready to satisfy us with its living waters. The Lord Himself tells us that judgment is His strange work, and that He delights in mercy. It is for the exhibition of mercy that He has erected the throne around which the brightest manifestation of His glory is now made; it is as the God of grace that He has revealed Himself, and that He wishes to be known by us; it is for mercy that He desires to be importuned; it is mercy that He desires to be glorified in dispensing; and it is only on those who refuse and despise His mercy that His rod of vengeance falls.

The Lord is slow to anger, unwilling to punish, till His glory requires it; but He is swift to show mercy; opening His arms wide to the soul, when afar off, to encourage it to come to His embrace. There is nothing in which God's heart goes forth more fully than in showing mercy to the soul for whom His dear Son died, and whom the Eternal Spirit has brought nigh. Though he may have lien among the pots and been cast out in the open field to the loathing of his person—a polluted, vile object for infinite purity to rest upon; yet when he comes, all vile and loathsome though he be, seeking for mercy, God's very heart goes forth to meet him; He receives him not with upbraiding, but with a welcome greeting; He stretches over him the sheltering wings of His mercy, and rejoices in contemplating his security. He takes off his vile garments, and puts on him with His own hand a change of raiment; He puts a ring on his hand, and rejoicing over him to do him good, calls on all heaven to unite in songs of praise that His mercy has secured another of its wished for trophies.

Do we then address any who feel their need of mercy? We would bid them look up, and see Him enthroned on the seat of mercy, bearing the sceptre of mercy, and His Son seated at His right hand, and all for the exaltation of

mercy. Is it mercy you seek? Would you value the least crumb of it cast you by the Lord more than the world and life? Then approach the throne of grace in the name of Him who is seated on its right hand, and as surely as that throne has been erected, so surely will you be satisfied with mercy.

4. God pardons *unalterably.*

He does not suspend forgiveness on condition of future loyalty and obedience, but He teaches the pardoned rebel to love and obey because he is forgiven. Nor does He, in announcing pardon for the past, insert a clause in the deed of indemnity, by which He may again revoke the sentence. His gifts and calling are without repentance. His people often provoke Him grievously; yet never does He say of them as He said of the old world, "It repenteth me that I have forgiven them;" nor do their bitterest provocations move Him to give them over to the law for punishment. He is God, and not man, and therefore they are not consumed. If indeed they forsake His law, and walk not in His commandments, then He visits their iniquities with stripes, and brings their sins to their remembrance. Nay, He plunges them in deep waters, and hiding from them His face, leaves their consciences to be the abode of guilt and fear, and a highway for Satan and his agents to drive through at their pleasure. But though sin brings thus returning torment to them, and He takes vengeance on their inventions, yet at the time when they are sinking deepest in the mire, when His waves and billows pass over them, and the prospect in the distance is that of apostasy and everlasting separation from God—at this very time, not one sin that had been forgiven appears again in His book to condemn them; nay, and not one drop of the wrath of the Judge is poured into their cup of bitterness. Let no one here mistake us. Far be it from us blasphemously to

assert that God can ever view sin even in His people without loathing and abhorrence of it as such, or that in them, as in others, it does not deserve His wrath and vengeance. Far be it from us also to assert that the believer's future as well as past sins are pardoned when he is pronounced a justified person. Such an unworthy and dangerous notion is no part of the truth of God. Equally removed, too, from His truth, would be every statement that would lead to the conclusion that the believer may or does commit sin with the less scruple because His forgiveness is sure—a notion abhorrent to the character of God and to the workings of His grace, and contradicted by the experience of every child of God. But while we would thus warn those who have hitherto neither part nor lot in forgiveness against perverting any one part of the truth regarding it, that truth, to the glory of God's grace and the consolation of His people, we must not and dare not shrink from stating; the wondrous and blessed truth, that though, if the believer falls into sin, the peace and the comforts of God forsake his soul, and he becomes, it may be, in his own experience a very brand of hell; though the Lord may at times bring old sins to his remembrance, so as to fix guilt fresh in the conscience; though He may make him possess the sins of his youth, and visit him on account of them; still, that in this remembrance and this visitation there is no wrath; and amidst all the self-accusations of the soul, not one of its countless sins appears at the bar of God to condemn it and demand its punishment. These sins, as it regards their power of condemnation, have ceased to be. They have been buried, and, as accusers, they shall never rise again either in this world or at a judgment-seat. Their memory is gone; nay, their existence in that character has ceased to be a fact. The record of their commission is erased. Open up and examine the book of God's remembrance,

and you will find no trace of them. Once they lay over them like a heavy frowning dark cloud, charged with God's lightning and thunder; but now, look up, and nothing appears in their cloudless heavens but the Sun of Righteousness. "The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found."

And as old sins are thus obliterated, so there is provision made for the continued forgiveness and blotting out of new sins. The believer's daily sins—for he ever comes short, and often grievously offends—are not suspended up against him to be yet reckoned for; but each new sin, as it appears, is borne away "to a land not inhabited." Let it be remembered, however, that the believer's sins cease not to be sins; so that his continued pardon is connected not only with his continued possession of the garment of Christ's righteousness, but with a continued act of faith in Christ as the Lord his Righteousness. The life of the justified and accepted saint is the life of the consciously unworthy and polluted sinner, who stands, in his own experience, when nearest heaven, in as great need of the righteousness and blood of Christ as when it first covered his nakedness and cleansed his pollution. There is therefore no such thing as a state of continued pardon separated from a life of continued and deepening repentance, and from the continued exercise of faith in Christ's blood, righteousness, and intercession. Where this character and these actings of soul are wanting, a state of condemnation, and not of justification, is the state of the sinner.

But bearing this in remembrance, the believer never *can* come into condemnation. He may indeed often offend; fear of coming short, doubts of acceptance, and suspicions of rejection in the end, may assault him, and find at times a lodgment in his breast; he may often be found prostrated

before God, and crying for mercy with greater importunity than when he first sought it. He will, without doubt, grow in daily acquaintance with the feelings and language of the publican as those which best befit him; and the more his experience of the riches of God's mercy in pardoning, the greater will be his wonder at mercy ever reaching him, the deeper his humiliation, and the more unfeigned and holy his sorrow and repentance that he does so little to testify his gratitude to God, and that that little is so defiled and imperfect. But his state is fixed and irrevocable; once pardoned and accepted, he is for ever so; once arrayed in the garment of Christ's righteousness, it shall never be taken from him till he is presented before God faultless.

What a wonderful view does this truth open up to us of the righteousness of Christ! that in consequence of the honour brought by His obedience and satisfaction to the justice and truth of God, He who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity should now be glorified in taking into His favour and embrace His enemies and rebellious subjects, and in continuing them in this state fixedly and irrevocably, notwithstanding the sin which remains in them, adheres to them, and defiles all they do. On what a basis must the throne of grace rest when the Holy God can thus manifest Himself, and what wonder if the work of the Redeemer should be the object of contemplation through eternity to the redeemed!

In conclusion, let all beware of perverting this great truth. If any go about to establish their own righteousness, let them beware lest that fearful stone fall on them of which it is said, "On whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder." They are fighting against God, and they shall not prevail. But especially they are fighting against that which is dearest to Him—the honour of His dear Son.

But there are those who sin because grace abounds. Grace does indeed abound—free, rich grace; but if any continue in sin, they put themselves without the pale of mercy, they lay themselves open to all the vials of God's wrath.

And let the people of God—those whose sins have been pardoned—see to it that as much has been forgiven them, they love much; and let them be humbled that they love so little; and let them see to it especially that they walk circumspectly, and thus stop the mouth of the calumnious world, and stop the calumnious mouth of Satan, which says that the grace of God leads to licentiousness.

But however it may be perverted, it is our duty as ambassadors of Christ to proclaim that "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" that there is a free pardon "without money and without price;" and that "now is the accepted time." But it is also our solemn duty to declare that the time is coming when many shall knock at mercy's door, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to me," but it shall be shut against them. Beware lest you be of that number, and lest God should say of you that because you would not honour His Son you shall perish.

SERMON III.

OBJECTS AND RECIPIENTS OF MERCY.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."—ISA. LV. 8, 9.

IF an earthly prince were to make a proclamation of pardon to a portion of his subjects who had rebelled against him, we should expect that there would be some exceptions; and that the exceptions would consist of those who from the post in which they stood, from the share they took in fomenting the rebellion, or from the especial malignity of their conduct, had rendered themselves unfit objects of mercy. We should expect, then, that some would be excepted, because they were regarded as incurable traitors, in whom rebellion was so deeply rooted that there was no hope of its being eradicated; or because the prince could not find it in his heart to pardon them; or because it would be unsafe, and a general encouragement to rebellion, to suffer them to escape unpunished. But there are no such exceptions found noted in the gospel proclamation. Are they wicked and unrighteous who hear it announced? Is their guilt great—even to that of *the* wicked and *the* unrighteous one? The call is equally to all, "Let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Are there, in the first place, any incurable sinners to be found among the children of Adam and in our Christian congregations? It cannot be questioned that the awful fact is revealed in the Scriptures, that even in this world there are some who are left of God to a reprobate mind; with whom the Spirit, in just and jealous displeasure for having been long resisted and despised, ceases to strive; and that this dreadful state is found in connection with unbelief and rejection of the gospel. But while it becomes us solemnly and earnestly to take heed to this truth, lest any one of us become like Esau, or Cain, or the body of the Jewish nation; we must also consider that, with respect to the mercy of God, with respect to the free offer of that mercy, and with respect to the efficacy of Christ's blood, there are none in an incurable state. But it may be said, What avails declaring this, since many are bound up from receiving mercy? It avails much; for it shows that though God in just sovereignty may withhold those influences which would make comfort valued, there is comfort for all who value gospel comfort. Do you feel yourself a guilty sinner in need of the mercy of God? Do you feel yourself a naked sinner in need of the righteousness of Christ? This very feeling shows that you are within the reach of mercy, nay, that mercy waits to greet you and to receive you.

Secondly, Are there any whom God cannot find it in His heart to pardon? No; God delights to pardon. There is not in God a disposition for its own sake to punish any sinner. There may be such a disposition in earthly princes; but it would be blasphemy to assert it of Him who "so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but should have eternal life." God does not rejoice in the sufferings of any of His creatures. There is indeed one dreadful

passage of His word which we must not forget nor pass over, "And it shall come to pass, that, as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought."[1] And again, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."[2] But while these words may show the impenitent what they may expect if they continue their impenitence, they do not show that God rejoices in the sufferings of the greatest sinner on account of the sufferings themselves. He may indeed rejoice in manifesting His justice and the dreadfulness of His wrath, when mercy has been insulted and despised; but He does not rejoice in the misery of any sinner. He wills not that any should perish. "As I live," saith the Lord, "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." Again, the call to every sinner is, "Repent, and be converted;" "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." God knows exactly the various states of each one of us; He knows our past, and what shall be our future, condition; and He foreknows whether there are any in this assembly to whom impenitence will finally prove their destruction; but the call to repentance clears God of the charge of willing their destruction; and if they perish, the blame will rest with their own impenitence, and not with God's will.

And as these two exceptions have no place in the gospel proclamation of pardon, so the *third* which we spoke of as applying to the proclamations of an earthly prince is also

[1] Deut. xxviii. 63. [2] Prov. i. 24-26, 28.

wanting. It cannot be unsafe for the ends of justice that the God of grace should pardon even the first criminal in His dominions, and therefore there is no reservation of this kind in His gospel message. It cannot be unsafe for the ends of justice; for justice, in smiting Christ, smote a victim incomparably nobler than any other or than all others. In making red its sword in the royal blood, the blood of the King's Son, its unbending character was asserted and its claims honoured, more than though at one stroke it had avenged itself on all His rebellious subjects. And so surely is it exalted in reference to any sinner that now flees to the covert of Christ's righteousness, that instead of hiding its head as if dishonoured, it claps its hands and triumphs in his acquittal. Every extension of pardon, while it is an especial manifestation of grace, is in fact an equally decided manifestation of justice; for it is a new call to contemplate the honour paid to it by this satisfaction of God's Son; and just in proportion to the honour paid to it by this satisfaction, above what it would have received in the punishment of the sinner, is the new honour brought to it by the forgiveness of any particular sinner above what it would receive from his suffering the penalty. There is a sense, therefore, in which even justice unites with mercy in calling on the guilty to receive pardon.

And in the way of example to the universe, the acquittal of the guilty is all on the side of holiness and against sin. There is no such thing in God's dominions as a pardoned rebel who is still a rebel at heart. If the spectacle could be exhibited of a criminal secured by the word and oath of God from punishment, and yet continuing in his rebellion, or of one who was made more secure in sin by having his sins pardoned, then indeed might we say, "Let us continue in sin, for grace abounds." But such a character is

a fiction; it is not to be found among God's redeemed and pardoned ones. God's pardon is not a cold, dry, barren document, merely conveying the words of pardon, but leaving the heart where it found it; it is an overwhelming, overpowering pardon, sweeping before it the pride and disloyalty of the sinner, melting his hard heart and making him to live to the praise and glory of God. And the measure of its actings is according to the words, Much has been forgiven, therefore there is much love. In proportion to the sense of guilt and unworthiness is the love and obedience that is returned. In proportion to the amount of debt forgiven is the humiliation and the wonder wrought in the experience of mercy.

Mercy being thus in every way secured in its honourable exercise, the proclamation of pardon issues forth free, full, and unfettered, carried on the wings of the gospel to every creature under heaven. Though your sins reached up to heaven, here is a mercy which is above them; though they reached down to hell, here is a mercy which extends to the lowest hell. However great be your guilt, whether you are old or young in sin, whether you are a cold formalist or an openly profane person; whether you are a professor or an open despiser, though you have sinned against light, privileges, and opportunities, the call is to you, "Return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on thee."

We shall now conclude with some application in order to bring the important doctrine of the text to our hearts and consciences.

And 1*st*. What a view does this give of the character of God! His heart is all graciousness; mercy gushing out from its inmost depths, leaping over the view of the sinner's guiltiness, and the yearning of the Father's heart over His Son; mercy stooping to save those who were like the very devils, offering them pardon, receiving them with

open arms; pardoning them freely, fully, heartily, and unalterably; rejoicing over them to do them good; and at last raising them to be partakers of His own blessedness and glory. This is the God of the gospel—whom to know, and His Son Jesus Christ, is life eternal. There is no other god than this; and if we worship any other being, we worship an idol, and we must share the doom of idol worshippers—vanity, and confusion, and everlasting disappointment. But if we insist that we worship *a* god, it is a god as vile and polluted as ourselves; and is this a god to trust in? is this a god to save us in the great and terrible day of the Lord? There is no other doctrine but this of the free and rich mercy of God that will ever raise a sinner from the pit of a stupified conscience, and from the prison of a guilty conscience, to walk in the light and liberty of a child of God.

2*d*. We should take occasion to inquire whether we know this God. And that we may do so, we would propose the following questions:—Have we seen God as so glorious in holiness, and dreadful in His punishment of sin, that we have trembled before Him, that we have felt ourselves exposed to His wrath and with nothing to cover us? Or do we think lightly of sin, and speak lightly of sin?—do we—as is said in the book of Job—hide sin as a sweet morsel under our tongue? If so, we do not yet know the God of the gospel. Do we see God to be the just and blessed One, even when His law condemns us? Or do we count Him a hard and austere master because He will not come down from His throne to where the bright flame which surrounds Him may not consume us? Do we find it hard to believe that it is the very same God who punishes sin eternally, who is also infinite in mercy? Every one who knows God savingly knows Him thus. If we think we have believed, is our faith that which makes us look with

less reverence on God? Does it make us less afraid of sin, and less cautious of its approach? Does it lead us to forget the precept, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling?" If so, we have yet to be made acquainted with the God of the gospel.

3*d*. This subject speaks comfort to all who feel themselves poor and guilty sinners. We would say to such an one—Though your sins were those which drowned the old world, though they were those which drew fire and brimstone from heaven upon Sodom, yet, "return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon you." Does the holy violated law make you afraid? Flee to the covert of Christ's blood, and there see the law magnified and made honourable; and the law will rejoice that you have escaped its inflictions. Is your conscience burdened with guilt which neither your groans nor prayers nor duties can wipe away? Flee to Christ's blood, and it shall be wiped as clean as if no sin had ever been recorded by it. Have you been guilty of all kinds of sin? of unbelief, of blasphemy, of profaneness, of wickedness toward your neighbours; and, knowing the desert of one sin, do sins unnumbered weigh you down? See Christ bearing the sins of a world—and is He not able to bear yours? Do you fear that God is not willing to receive you; and do you feel as if His glory required your punishment? See Him wounding His own Son, and continuing to smite until the Sufferer said, "It is finished," and having borne Him through all this, fails His mercy, fails His grace now?

4*th*. What a vivid and intense light does this subject throw on the justice of God in the punishment of the finally impenitent! Having refused His mercy, while He lives they shall be enduring His wrath. Bear with me, my friends, while I address a few words to you solemnly. We speak to all unregenerate persons. You are exposed to the

wrath of God—a wrath, the dreadfulness of which none can know but those who have experienced its inflictions; and you have no assurance that the next moment it may not gush out upon you. It is said, "If these things are done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"—and if God's justice spared not His own Son when He stood for sins not His own, shall it spare you when you bear the guilt of unnumbered sins of your own contracting? But there is hope for you. "Return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon you;" and this mercy will be as free to you as the daily bread of His providence, or as the air you breathe. Oh, if you felt the burden of unpardoned sin, and heard the invitation as coming from God himself, it would make your heart to leap for joy! The call to repentance includes a promise of justification, sanctification, and every blessing that you need. But if you leave this house indifferent and unconcerned after having this warning given you, you will be taking the direct road to ruin your souls. We entreat you then,—feebly indeed for so important a subject,—but earnestly and tenderly we entreat you, by the worth of your immortal souls—for they are *very precious*,—by the nothingness of this passing world, by the sufferings of Christ upon the Cross, by the sweetness of communion with God, by the delusions and infidelity of a world lying in wickedness and hastening to destruction, by the near approach of that day when many shall curse the day of their birth because they rejected the only Saviour, to open up your ears and your hearts to the call of mercy.

SERMON IV.

THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."—2 COR. VIII. 9.

To attempt to define the word *grace* were to obscure it. We might call it rich undeserved mercy, or exceeding great kindness; but the words that follow it are its best definition: "Ye know" what He did, "that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." The meaning of the word here, then, is something different from its ordinary meaning. It includes that, but it includes something more. It is not only, Ye know that your redemption by Christ is all of pure, free, undeserved mercy; but it is, Ye know what astonishing mercy this is, what surpassing grace—the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the work of redemption we have the most wonderful display of all the Divine perfections; but it is grace that shines the brightest. We have the manifold wisdom of God, the exceeding greatness of His power, the untainted purity of His nature, His unalterable and unbending rectitude, His fixed inviolable truth; we have them all displayed, and—what of itself were sufficiently wonderful—displayed in conjunction with grace. But we have also a more marvellous display of them through the exercise of

grace. As, therefore, grace is the central and most brilliant star in the constellation, so the display of all the other perfections tends to its still brighter display. They shine forth to invite us to gaze most fixedly upon grace, as that where most of the Divine character is to be seen.

The grace of God in redemption is sometimes set forth to us by the Father's giving His only-begotten Son, by His not sparing Him, but delivering Him up for us all; in other places by the Son's voluntarily undertaking and executing the work of our redemption. The work is all of grace: the character of those who are redeemed shows that it must necessarily be of grace. But it is the worth and the humiliation and the sufferings of the Son of God that teach us the abundance and the altogether unspeakable character of this grace. It is important indeed for us to remember that, while the grace of redemption in its superabounding and manifold manifestation is brought before us thus in order that the poor weak faith of the sinner may find some resting-place while conversing with so sublime a subject, we must not think of it as though the grace of One of the Divine Persons in the glorious Trinity were more wonderful than that of the other Two. The grace of the Father is the grace of God manifested to us. It is through the Son, and by the Holy Spirit, that we approach the Father. But the grace of the Father in sending the Son, and of the Son in voluntarily undertaking the work of redemption, and of the Spirit in applying it, are but one and the same abounding grace of God, "reigning through righteousness unto eternal life." Yet it is in the Lord Jesus that this grace flows forth; it is through His incarnation and death that it reaches sinners; it is in Him that it is made known to them; and it is by Him, as the Mediator, that we approach grace in its fountain, and taste that God is good.

In contemplating this surpassing grace of the Lord Jesus, let us consider four things:—

I. The pre-existent state of Christ: "He was rich"—rich in all the treasures of Divinity. From everlasting He was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God. The self-existence, and eternity, and immensity, and omnipotence, and omnipresence of God, these were His own eternal possessions. The dominion of God was His; the crown of the universe encircled His brows. The uncreated glory, the harmonious and matchless perfections, the all-sufficiency and infinite self-delight and blessedness of the Godhead were His. He had a glory with His Father before the world was; dwelling in His bosom, and being with Him, the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person; and enjoying unceasingly the expression of the Father's infinite complacency and delight. He was thus, in every possible respect, infinitely and unchangeably rich. It was impossible that through the future eternity His riches could be either increased or diminished. His glory would have been as resplendent though no creature had ever been formed to behold it; and His blessedness as perennial though the redeemed world had been left, with the angels that kept not their first estate, to perish. It is impossible, therefore, that the purpose of redemption can have taken its rise in a desire to increase this glory or this blessedness. Here, indeed, we are to take heed lest we "darken counsel by words without knowledge;" for "who by searching can find out God? who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?" "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world"—from everlasting. But it is essential for us to know and to remember that as our Redeemer is the mighty God, so He was absolutely independent of His creatures, enjoying infinite and perennial blessedness in Himself. It

is necessary for us to know and to remember this, that we may trace redemption to its source, as it regards *us* —free and rich grace exercised towards the miserable and the guilty. It is necessary for us also to contemplate fixedly, and to contemplate till we are taught to adore and wonder, the riches and glory of the Redeemer as truly and everlastingly God. Without such a contemplation as this, we shall never arrive at a discovery either of the magnitude of redemption in itself, of the grace of the Lord Jesus manifested in it, of the security of the foundation laid in Him, of the splendour of His righteousness, or of the preciousness of His blood as the Son of God. Nor shall we otherwise be taught, in our dealings with this Blessed One, to adore and to tremble while we believe and hope. Our Redeemer is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; He is the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley; but He is also the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His Person, in whose presence the seraphim and cherubim cover their faces with their wings, saying "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

II. The objects for whom the Lord Jesus became poor. They were creatures. Had they, as such, been answering the end of their creation, His power would have protected and His goodness would have blessed them; but here would be no call for any new exhibition of His character. They were miserable. Were it possible for misery to exist in the universe of God without sin as the cause of it, there would have been room for the exuberant manifestation of the Divine compassion. But they were rebels. They had been created after His own image, they had been placed under His gracious and happy government, and they had rebelled against Him; they had dared to attempt to live without God. They were enemies,—haters of God, of His attributes, and of His laws. They were enemies without cause, and yet

bitter enemies. Their enmity, too, was of a character that no kindness or grace in itself could overcome or subdue —an increasingly bitter enmity; an enmity unmixed and pure; an enmity that nothing else would satisfy than that God should cease to be God. They were unholy and polluted. Every faculty of their souls was tainted and leprosied with the abominable thing; the very sight could not be borne by infinite purity. Such is our condition as described in the Word of God, and such is it known and felt to be by all who understand the words, "If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Here, then, was room for loathing, for abhorrence, for hatred; but what room was there for love? Could rebellion excite it? Could pollution excite it? Here was room for the manifestation of justice; for manifesting to the universe, as had been done in the case of the angels that kept not their first estate, that God's authority was not to be trifled with. Here was a call for a second and a more appalling exhibition of His hot displeasure against sin. Their eternal misery would not have shaken His happiness; nay, it would have been a standing memorial of His rectitude and His goodness. And yet grace and mercy towards a portion of these vile traitors began to move in the breast of the Everlasting Son, and to sue for exercise. Here we are lost; lost in the attempt to fathom what cannot be fathomed, nay, to understand the possibility of such feelings in any other way than this, that "He is God."

That this grace of the Everlasting Son was sovereign, we know; the angels that sinned did not experience it; but that it is also pure grace and pure surpassing love, we know. It leaped forth from its fathomless depths in the bosom of the Divine Son, and it terminated in electing grace on a portion of Adam's rebellious and polluted family. Once

fixed upon them, the horrors of their condition were brought before its view; the pit, the horrible pit in which they lay, and the dark and dreary eternity in the distance. It cried for their deliverance, it desired it earnestly. This view of grace, and grace alone as it regards the redeemed, prompting the Son of God to interfere for their redemption, is perhaps too dazzling for the saints in this world; so that they seek to relieve it by contemplating especially the glory redounding from its exhibition to the Divine perfections. And yet, while the purpose and end of its exhibition must necessarily terminate on God, it is to its objects pure unmixed mercy and grace.

But how *could* this mercy and grace be exercised? Here was rebellion; how could it be forgiven? Here was guilt, how could it be cancelled? Here was pollution—entire and increasingly dark pollution; how could it be approached? How could it be overcome? Was justice to sheathe its sword and withdraw its claims? This were impossible; for where then would be the Divine glory, the Divine purity, the Divine truth, the Divine unchangeableness? Where would be the security of protection and blessedness to the loyal subjects of the Divine government? Where the equity of the sufferings of the fallen spirits? How again could the infinitely holy God return to the temple whence He had been driven? How could He look to the soul that had dislodged Him, and that had admitted to its throne His arch-enemy? How could He come forth to it except to consume it? Or if grace sued for its renovation, and if Almighty grace could contemplate so marvellous a work, yet where were the security for the Divine honour and the Divine purity in accomplishing it? Unless justice, then, were satisfied, and the Divine honour maintained, it was impossible either that mercy could be exercised towards the rebels, or that Almighty power could

go forth on the ground of this satisfaction to reconcile and reclaim them. But where was this satisfaction to be sought except from the guilty? and if from them, how could they render it except in suffering the vengeance of eternal fire? Such thoughts as these are not foreign to the subject of our contemplation, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." What if the seraphim and cherubim, and all the angelic host, after they had witnessed the casting down of their rebellious brethren and their binding in everlasting chains, had been told that towards another band of traitors mercy was contemplated, and had been told nothing of the plan devised for securing its honourable and triumphant exercise, would not the subject have been to them utterly dark and incomprehensible? Let us here then adore and admire divine and unsearchable wisdom, and especially the exhibition of infinite grace, "He became poor."

III. "The Lord Jesus Christ became poor." While the Scripture warrants, and indeed requires us to say, that in no other way could grace be exercised, yet the Lord Jesus' undertaking to cast up the high way by which He could reach our world, was a free and voluntary undertaking.

We are not to think of the words, "He became poor," as though they implied that He ceased to be what He was, very and eternal God; for in Him when incarnate "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." But He came to be that which He had not been; He became the opposite of all that He had been; and, to all outward appearance, to the eye of flesh and blood, He was poor. Though unchangeably rich in all the glories of Divinity, He emptied Himself of them as to their outward manifestation and cast a veil upon their brightness. It behoved Him in the wondrous work He meditated to leave them behind Him. Indeed, had He appeared with them, they would have consumed sinners, and even His people could not have borne

23071

their refulgence. Therefore in infinite self-humiliation He cast a veil upon them, and appeared among His creatures and subjects not "in the form of God," but "in the form of a servant;" and though some rays of His divinity broke forth in His mighty works, though its glory broke forth on the mount of transfiguration, and though the eye of faith "saw his glory," yet outwardly and to the eye of sense He seemed but as a man, as if He were one of us; and He was content to appear so. To estimate the grace of Christ in this, it were necessary for us to know how infinitely worthy that glory which He veiled was to be admired and adored; to know the infinite self-complacency with which He Himself must have regarded it, and His consciousness of His claims to the admiration and adoration of the universe. We must know it then as "passing knowledge."

"He became poor" in assuming our nature. He became truly bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. And who can estimate this grace, or fathom this condescension? "Great," indeed, "is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." He took it upon Him, and assumed it into intimate and indissoluble union with His divine Person; and though He took it sinless, as pure from all stain as it was in Adam when He was created, yet He took it after it had become fallen and sinful. He appeared "in the likeness of sinful flesh." Here indeed was poverty and humiliation. This is more a subject for thought and contemplation than for language; but surely the little that many nominal Christians find to wonder at in the incarnation of the Son of God, is a proof that they have never fixedly contemplated or rightly understood it. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Believer, adore that grace that led the Lord Jesus to take on Him not the nature of angels,

but the seed of Abraham, and that led Him to become your brother, like unto you in all things, yet without sin.

He humbled Himself even as a man. He was born in a stable and laid in a manger, as though He were unworthy of a house to receive Him. He laboured as a carpenter, as though He needed to make His bread by the sweat of His brow. For the last three years of His life He was often homeless, not knowing where to lay His head, and was indebted for the supply of His wants to the attentions of His followers. And yet He was the King of kings and the Lord of all. Believers, draw near and adore, while you hear the joyful sound that to you has been born a Saviour, Christ the Lord; and see here too how the ineffable condescension and humiliation of the Son of God has dignified and ennobled poverty, and stamped all the vain pomp and glory of this world with beggary. Are you poor? Remember that Christ was poor.

Not only this, but He submitted to be counted a worm, and no man. "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." He went about exhibiting holiness in its pure and divine beauty, doing good unceasingly and publishing salvation; proclaiming His own surpassing grace, and inviting the guilty and the miserable to come to Him. And yet slander, contempt, reproach, and persecution were His portion. He, the holy Lamb of God, was called a glutton and a blasphemer. His mighty works of love and mercy were attributed to Belial, and the gospel of His grace was met by, "He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?" He submitted to it; He had prepared Himself for it. He submitted to it from vile hypocrites, from a generation of vipers, from those whom He came to save, from those whom in a moment He could have consumed. He submitted to it patiently and meekly. He submitted to it till it broke His heart. He was a man of

sorrows. Never had earth such a tenant, and yet never was such reproach the portion of any of its inhabitants. No one welcomed the Son of God or spoke well of Him, till He himself had, by an act of new-creating power, put it into their hearts to do so. Scarcely had He entered the world as the "child born" when His life was sought to be taken away; and almost the first opening of His sacred lips to proclaim His gospel was met by an attempt to stone Him. He bore it all, for He had set His face as a flint. The exhibition and manifestation of His grace rose and brightened with the calumny and enmity that it excited. He was at length seized by wicked hands, dragged before an unrighteous tribunal, and there iniquitously condemned, spit upon as the very refuse of all things, scourged, crowned with thorns, and finally, in the most painful, excruciating, and ignominious manner, as though human or diabolical ingenuity could not do enough to testify the feelings of loathing with which He was regarded, put to death between two malefactors. And this sufferer was the everlasting and ineffably rich and glorious Son of God; the infinitely holy, the all-sufficient and Almighty Creator and Governor of the universe. Surely here was poverty. Believer! sit down at the cross; look upon Him whom you have pierced, and bemoan yourself as one of that murderous race that killed the Prince of Life. Surely we have here proof enough of the inherent depravity and devilish enmity of the heart. Adore too that surpassing grace that led Him to bear this unparalleled and never-to-be paralleled load of calumny, shame, scorn, reproach, and pain. It was your sorrows that He bore. He has gone before you in the wilderness to take the sting out of your sorrows; but, oh, learn to feel from home in that world where your Lord was crucified.

"He became poor" especially, inasmuch as, though the

Lord and Giver of the Law, He yet became voluntarily subject to it. He placed Himself under the ceremonial law —a law implying in all its injunctions the pollution of its subjects—that He might redeem the Church from it. He placed Himself under the moral law in its requirements and sanctions as a covenant of life, as though He needed to work out life by personal obedience. He yielded obedience to it, in a low and mean condition. He yielded it in the midst of rebels. He yielded it amidst unceasing difficulties and temptations. This is a sacred subject; but how gloriously does Christ's obedience shine forth even in this, that amidst His unparalleled trials—trials differing from all that ever have been or will be endured in this, that He suffered innocently—His Father's will never ceased for a moment to be regarded by Him with unmixed complacency and resignation. He knew no sin. He was conscious that He knew it not; and yet He was marked out as the alone exception to the rule of the Divine government that connects suffering with sin. And how gloriously does His obedience shine forth in this also, that amidst the ingratitude, the sneers, the scorn, the enmity, the malevolence, and finally the murderous assaults of sinners, He yet never ceased to exercise towards them the purest benevolence and love. What mere created excellence could have come forth unsullied from such a trial? Who but the Son of God could have in such circumstances maintained his integrity?

"He became poor," above all, in being "made a curse" for His people, as though He were a bankrupt, as though He deserved to die for sins that were His own, and as though in Him had been concentrated the guilt of hell. He took upon Him the load of His people's iniquities; and what a fearful load was this! He who knew no sin stood under it, as though He were a sinner; yea, the greatest sinner

in the universe; as though He were that which He infinitely abhorred; as though He were the very personification of the evil and accursed thing. He was "made sin." He submitted to feel the fearfulness of bearing such a burden, to feel the agonies of the punishment of sin—to feel the sharpness of the sword of inflexible justice wielded by Almighty power. The wrath that the innumerable sins and incalculable guilt of His people merited, fell upon Him, and He submitted to bear it. He submitted to be treated by His Father as though He were a sinner and a rebel—as though, instead of being the Son of His love, he were unworthy of His fellowship. He submitted to feel the hidings of His Father's countenance, the unutterable, and to all creatures inconceivable, agonies of His Father's wrath. And though the contemplation of the cup filled Him with agony, though it forced from Him the cry, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," yet He went forward to meet it. He bared His breast to His Father's sword, and drank the cup of His wrath to the very dregs.

Here indeed, on the cross, it is that we see the poverty of the Son of God. Here let us behold Him enduring at once the greatest contempt and scorn, the most excruciating bodily pains, and the most torturing mental anguish, the hootings of men, the assaults of hell, and the dereliction of His Father;—earth disowning Him, hell let loose against Him, heaven shut against Him. No answer to His cry, "My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Alone, and of the people none with Him, the infinite justice of the Godhead dealing with Him for the sins of an elect world, displaying its glory and concentrating its terrors. And is this indeed He who was in the bosom of God from eternity, and was God? Oh let us behold the Lamb of God! Believer, draw near, and while you tremble at the

sight of eternal consuming purity as manifested in His sufferings, adore Him who thus by the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God. Adore especially that grace which led Him to encounter such untold and never to be told humiliation and agony for such a wretch as you.

Finally, He became poor in giving over His sacred body to the power of the grave, as though it had a right to claim Him as its captive—as though death had come to Him, the Prince of Life, as the wages of sin. He, who only is incorruptible, submitted to it—He entered its prison. But let us bless God that it was impossible that He should be holden there, but that He rose a triumphant conqueror, the first-fruits and forerunner of a redeemed world, and that He is now exalted as a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. Here then, tracing the steps of the poverty of God's everlastingly rich and beloved Son, let us acknowledge that His grace passeth all knowledge.

IV. "That ye through his poverty might be rich."

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, as it passeth knowledge in its very existence, so it contemplated and craved for its objects a riches corresponding with its own immensity; and this riches His glorious meritorious poverty procured for them. This grace sought their deliverance from wrath, and His poverty procured it—procured it so truly and so fully that the wrath can never touch them; that neither heaven nor hell can lay anything to their charge; that the law can never sue them for payment, nor justice for punishment. To estimate this riches, it were necessary to feel the horrors of this wrath, and to feel it through eternity—which the God of all grace grant that we may not feel. To this unutterable woe they were exposed, and from this bottomless pit His grace rescued

them. This grace sought their deliverance from sin, and His poverty procured it so truly that the reign of the tyrant is destroyed here, and its very being in the soul extinguished at death and extinguished for ever. With this hideous, hellish, and degrading leprosy they were covered, to the utter loss of all dignity, all glory, all blessedness. His poverty procured their deliverance from it; a deliverance begun here, and perfected hereafter, so that they shall be faultless, without spot and blemish. This grace sought their deliverance from their outcast and apostate condition as banished from the Divine presence, and estranged from the Divine fellowship, and His poverty procured it. He brings them nigh by His blood, obtains for them a reception at the hands of the Divine majesty corresponding with His own preciousness; procures for them and calls them to the dignity of His joint heirs, and obtains for them the shining forth in complacency and love of the Divine countenance. This grace sought for them a watchful, tender, and gracious guidance through this world, a safe passage through the waters of death, a sure conduct to the gate of heaven, and admission there to His own presence: His grace sought and His poverty procured it. He guides them by His eye through the wilderness of this world; He watches their steps and holds up their goings; He preserves them from falling—from falling away from grace, and from falling into the hand of their spiritual enemies; He administers consolation and strength as they need; He goes with them through fire and through water; and finally, presents them before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, that they may behold His glory, that they may be with Him, that they may see His face, that He may lead them unto fountains of living waters, that He may crown them with unfading and everlasting felicity. To estimate this riches, then, it were necessary to know the extreme of

misery and the extreme of felicity, the misery of hell and the happiness of heaven.

Let us, then, if we would contemplate this grace, and know it as passing knowledge, seek to perceive the uncreated riches of the Son of God; let us pray for a discovery of it; let us next contemplate the pit in which its objects lay, its misery, its guilt, its hideous foulness and pollution; let us then seek to be conducted along the road of Christ's humiliation and poverty; and finally, let us, if we have tasted in any measure of this grace, endeavour to bring together and concentrate the rich blessings it procures for its objects, and let us say that the grace of Christ passeth knowledge.

The practical reflections that arise out of this subject are numerous and important. Let us notice a few of them.

1. How is the work of redemption impressed in all its parts with the footsteps of Divinity! Here is God becoming poor for vile sinners, to raise them up from a bottomless depth of misery and guilt. It is this great and most wondrous truth that constitutes the glory of redemption, and that gives its divine excellency to our holy religion.

2. Do we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? In other words, are we Christians indeed? As the truth that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" is the sum and substance of God's revelation, it is the one great truth to be believed in: do we truly believe it? This is not such a very unimportant question as many would have it to be. Do we believe it so as to rest in it, casting anchor for an eternity upon it, so as to glory in it, so as to experience its power in our hearts—for it is not the bare speculation that will avail us—so as to have our hearts filled with its wonders, so as to have our aims and our end of existence fixed by it. He deserves not the name of a Christian who does not thus know the grace of the Lord

Jesus Christ, whose mind has not been filled by it as the noblest of all truths, whose affections have not fixed upon it as the most attractive of all objects, whose soul has not found rest in it, or who would conjoin with it as a ground of dependence any doings, works, duties of his own; in a word, whose mind it has not fixed in contemplation, whose heart it has not claimed and obtained possession of, and whose life is not guided and directed by its holy and sin-overcoming power.

3. How should it enhance, sweeten, and endear the blessings of salvation to poor sinners, that they have been purchased at the expense of Christ's poverty! Did He become poor that we through His poverty might be rich; did He leave heaven and descend as it were into very hell to snatch you as a brand from the burning and to raise you to heaven; did He endure the full weight of wrath, that you might enjoy the smiles of His Father's countenance, and be comforted with everlasting consolation? Oh! then, let the thought endear to you the blessings of His salvation. Think of them, when they are offered to you and when you taste of them, as dearly bought, as bought with Christ's blood. Think of them thus, that you may see an inexpressible preciousness in the least drop of mercy. Think of them thus, that you may be taught to love Him who first loved you.

SERMON V.

THE SUBSTITUTION AND RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."—2 COR. v. 21.

THESE words bring before us two great acts of God—judicial acts designed to show us what He is as the righteous Judge of all, and not this only, but to show His grace in conjunction with righteousness; acts quite out of His ordinary procedure, whether we view them as displaying His grace or His righteousness. It is the most transcendent exhibition of His goodness, and it is an altogether new display of His character as the righteous Judge. In His ordinary procedure, in administering impartially His own law, out of His bounty He rewards the righteous, and in His holiness and truth He sentences the guilty to punishment. But here He is presented to us dealing with the innocent as though he merited punishment, and with the sinner as though he merited the reward of obedience. And further, one of these acts is the foundation of the other and in order to the other. The one is the act of the Father towards the Son, of which it may be affirmed that it is the most glorious display of the character of God, the most lustrous and teeming in its manifestation of the Divine perfections. The other is the act of God towards the sinner, of which it may be said that it is His most marvellous dealing with His creatures, involving in it the bestowing

of blessings of everlasting value. In the one act, He imputed sin to the Surety, on the ground of His representing sinners and taking their place; in the other, He imputes righteousness to the sinner, on the ground of His being in the Surety. Let us consider these two great acts of God, each clause in succession; taking along with us the truths (seeking to have them inwrought in us, in their efficacy, by the Holy Spirit)—that the plan of redemption regards our whole race as in a state of condemnation because of sin; that redemption is the chief of the works of God; and, that the Divine perfections, more especially righteousness, grace, and wisdom, are to be seen in exercise for man's redemption in the provision of a Surety, through whom salvation reaches us.

I. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin."

Here the Surety is described as "knowing no sin." Elsewhere He is described as He "who *did* no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth,"[1] "as a high priest holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."[2] But *this* is a peculiar way of expressing perfect purity. There is an all-comprehensive knowledge of sin possessed by Jesus in His divine nature as the Son of God. There is a pure knowledge of its infinite evil, filling the heart with hatred to it, which is possessed by holy beings. Viewed in this light, Jesus knew it in a measure and with an intensity of feeling peculiar to Himself. There is a knowledge of it from experience of its lustings, which is possessed by sinners and imperfect saints. Viewed in this light, Jesus "knew no sin." He was born of a woman, yet without sin; for "the Holy Spirit came upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her."[3] He lived among sinners, but He was separate from them.

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 22. [2] Heb. vii. 26. [3] Luke i. 35.

The law of God was in His heart, and every thought and word and action were in accordance with its spirituality and purity. He was tried as no other has been or can be tried; but the trial served only to make His purity burn the brighter. "Which of you," he said, "convinceth me of sin?" The confession of Judas was, "I have betrayed innocent blood." And the language of Pilate was, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person." A perpetual shadow of this purity had been given under the law in the requirement that the sacrifice should be without blemish,[1] and with reference to this, Jesus is described as the Lamb of God.

The purity of Jesus, considered in itself, would only be repelling to sinners, producing that state of mind which would find fitting expression in the words, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." But His purity as the sacrifice of expiation is an unspeakably attractive truth. Did God's holy law demand perfect purity of nature in Him who was to be the substitute of the unholy? Jesus presented to it true human nature without one stain. Did it demand perfect obedience, that it might be honoured in its precept, and that the reward of obedience might be bestowed on transgressors? Jesus obeyed it fully, and magnified it in obeying it. Did it demand that it should be fulfilled in its penal sanction also? He was made sin, who knew no sin.

What a contrast is here!—a contrast that fully appears only when we think of Him who was made sin, as the Holy One, God's Eternal Son "with us;" and when we think that the act was that of the Father, whose voice was heard from the excellent glory, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son;" and

[1] Lev. i. 3; xxii. 20, 21.

He made Him to be sin, because His dear Son had voluntarily undertaken to be the Surety of sinners, and desired freely to lay down His life for them. This is sufficient answer to the objection brought by the enemies of the cross of Christ against His surety-sufferings, as though it were unrighteous in God to permit or inflict them. These and all similar objections against the central truth of revelation are to be traced to the old source in the heart of man—the pride which exalts itself against God, and enmity to His glorious righteousness and grace.

"He made him to be sin." This being in itself a very terrible display of the character of God, we might expect the revelation given of it to be of a description fitted, above all else, to produce feelings of solemnity and awe. And what is there in the Bible to compare with the account given us of the last sufferings of Christ, when we think who the Sufferer was, and when we trace every successive step of His sufferings, from His apprehension in the garden till He gave up His spirit! What a picture of the human heart! What a demonstration of men's desert of eternal condemnation! And how incomprehensible His sufferings, except on the one supposition that He was "made sin!" But when we take this along with us, then everything, so to speak, is in harmony and in keeping. We not only see a righteous and a holy God permitting and ordaining what the wicked hands of men accomplished, but we realize something inconceivably more dreadful as going on in that hour than what the natural eye witnesses. Sin was reckoned to Him, or laid upon Him,—sin, the enemy of God's glory and of the happiness of the universe. He was made sin so that He should be dealt with according to its infinite demerit; so that what the holy law would have sought through endless ages in sinful finite beings, even perfect satisfaction, it should once for all seek and find in

a Divine Person, the Eternal Son of the Lawgiver. Thus there was an hour in time, when the justice of heaven apprehended the "Brightness of the Father's glory," Immanuel—as representing sin.

It was "for us." All that He suffered was considered by the justice of heaven as suffered in behalf and room of His people. It was for "the multitude that no man can number;" and it comes to the same thing whether we say, for those who were given to Him and chosen in Him, or for those who believe in His name—for you, therefore, if you are looking at this great sight and seeing the only door of hope for your soul in His being made sin. It was not merely for our benefit, but in our very room and place —our Surety representing our very persons—as it is said, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all,"[1] and "His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."[2] The sovereign grace of God had fixed for whom He should suffer. But as He needed to be *made sin* if He were to save any sinner at all, the price to be paid for the redemption of one soul was sufficient to redeem a world.

Being made sin, having the sins of His people laid upon Him, He suffered the penalty of the law, "The soul that sinneth it shall die;"[3] "For the wages of sin is death;"[4] according to the words, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts;"[5] "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."[6] As surely as Jesus was "made sin" by an act of God the Father in execution of His eternal counsel, He was "made a curse." He who spared not the angels that sinned, who drove sinful man out of Paradise, who manifested Himself

[1] Isa. liii. 6.
[2] 1 Pet. ii. 24.
[3] Ezek. xviii. 4.
[4] Rom. vi. 23.
[5] Zech. xiii. 7.
[6] Gal. iii. 13.

on Mount Sinai as a consuming fire, who is the just and impartial Judge, dealt with Him according to the real demerit of sin; His inflexible justice was put forth as freely in smiting Him, as though He had merited in His own person to be made a curse. Whatever mystery may attend this solemn subject, however inadequate may be our thoughts of the propitiatory sufferings of Jesus Christ, yet we know that the "curse of the law" fell upon Him, and spent itself on His blessed head. No doubt there are some things which accompany the punishment of sin when endured by the sinner, that could not be experienced by Jesus Christ, such as horror of conscience, the conflict of evil passions, or the feeling of despair. From all such things He was altogether free. But He endured that in which the curse of the law mainly consists,—He was forsaken of God; and if there are ingredients in the cup of trembling which the sinner drinks that could not be in Christ's cup, on the other hand there are ingredients of bitterness in His cup known only to Himself, arising from His perfect purity, His inconceivable abhorrence of sin, and His sense of the preciousness of His Father's love.

However poor our thoughts may be of this great subject, it would be much to realize the true character of the sufferings and death of Christ, as a solemn transaction between the Father and the Son—the Father, as the Judge of all, giving a new lesson to the universe on the necessary connection between sin and punishment, on the desert of sin and on the riches of Divine love. It would be much to be helped to follow the Sufferer on that night from Gethsemane to the cross, in His bloody sweat, in the thick darkness, in His loud cry, "My God, my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?" to behold Divine justice in its sacredness, and Divine love in its riches; and especially, while feeling that all our thoughts of His sufferings and love come

infinitely short, to see Him not only exhausting the curse and conquering death, but glowing with zeal for the honour of the law and the glory of His Father, and with love to sinners; and in the exercise of these graces offering Himself up "a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour," making an end of sin by making reconciliation for it, satisfying Divine justice by fully bearing its inflictions, redeeming His people with His blood, and bringing in for them an everlasting righteousness.

II. All this was done, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." He, knowing no sin, for us sinners was made sin; we, unrighteous and ungodly, in Him are made the righteousness of God.

It is not said, "that we might be forgiven." That is included, but more is needed. The pardon of sin, however great a blessing, is only deliverance from the condemning sentence of God's law—the release of the sinner from prison. But it does not open the gate of heaven to him. That can only be secured through his having a righteousness commensurate with the demands of the Divine law.

When we begin to make acquaintance with the justice of God, the demerit of sin, and our own sinfulness, we see and feel that something more than a full forgiveness of past sin is necessary in order to our peace and salvation. We feel that in some wonderful way, and that a way of pure grace and glorious righteousness, we must obtain an interest in the favour of God, and be secured from forfeiting the Divine favour in time to come. We do not see how one can have true settled peace without this. Such is the experience (though not with the same measure of clearness and depth of impression in every case) of one truly convinced of sin, brought to understand his relation as a sinner to God and His holy law, and to see that he

needs such a foundation of hope for his guilty soul as will abide the trial of the great day. Where there is merely a sense of the guiltiness of particular sins, without any true acquaintance with the justice of God, we may think that the pardon of sin will be enough,—pardon to be obtained through our self-wrought repentance and faith. But when the holy law takes hold of a sinner, and reveals itself to him in its exceeding breadth, then he sees that there can be no pardon or peace for him unless he have this law on his side, not only ceasing to condemn him but actually "for him."

Now the glory of the work of Christ appears in its sufficiency to meet such a state as this, and to satisfy all the requirements of the awakened conscience and of the convinced sinner. His being made sin is set before us in God's word, not only as having the effect of "making an end of sin," or "putting it away," and "redeeming His people from the curse of the law," so as entirely and for ever to remove their guilt, deliver them from condemnation, and make them in this respect as clear as if they had never sinned—"whiter than snow;" but, further, considered as the last and crowning act of obedience to the Father, it is represented as "bringing in everlasting righteousness," or "obtaining eternal redemption" for His people. "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."[1] The work of Christ is thus to be considered in the twofold light of being satisfying to Divine justice, and meritorious of eternal life;—satisfying, mainly as it was a work of suffering; meritorious, mainly as it was a work of obedience; but, whether viewed as a work of obedience or suffering, infinite in value because of the glory of His Person. And thus it is that it is suited to the state of the sinner, who needs not only pardon for the

[1] Rom. v. 19.

past, but a sure interest in the favour of God, in a way at once of grace and righteousness.

If, in considering any of the great truths of the gospel, we need the teaching of the Holy Spirit, we need it, in a peculiar manner, when we speak or think of the work of Christ. The reason why our views of it are so utterly inadequate, is because we have such inadequate views of the glory of His Person. It is a great thing for a self-condemned sinner to realize the suitableness of the righteousness of Christ to his case, as the righteousness of God.

Now the apostle, after telling us of this righteousness, declares that it is "unto all."[1] Fully revealed in its glory, it is exhibited to *all* without any difference. It is free, as is the light of the sun, or the air of heaven. And it is exhibited that it may become ours; or rather, Jesus Christ —Jehovah the righteousness of sinners—is in the gospel held forth in the excellency of His Person, the riches of His compassion, and the perfection of His work, and in His readiness to become *our* righteousness and our Saviour.

What is required of us, in order to translation from a state of condemnation to one of acceptance, is that we believe in the name of Christ; that believing God's truth concerning our own state,[2] and concerning His Son, and realizing His authority and grace in the command and call to believe, we renounce all hope of mercy or of acceptance in any other way, and "submit" with adoring wonder to the "righteousness of God." This is faith: which, on the one hand, is opposed to working—to any merit, goodness, or strength of ours; and, on the other hand, is the willing reception of what the grace of God has provided through the blood of His own Son. What more could be added to the gospel, to make it "glad tidings?" What could be more suited to our case?

[1] Rom. iii. 22. [2] Rom. iii. 9-20.

Now, when one, through grace, believes in Christ, he comes to be "in Christ." Through faith (in its very nature a uniting grace), that wondrous union is made up between him and the Saviour, the mystery of which is unfolded by the Holy Ghost under so many similes. How intimate it is, and how everlastingly precious the blessings which flow from it!

And this union or being "in Christ" is the ground of his being dealt with by God according to the merits of the Surety. As the manslayer's being in the city of refuge was the ground of his being protected and sheltered, so that the avenger of blood could not follow him there, but that all the immunities and privileges of the city became his; so is it with the sinner in Christ. His being "in Christ" is the ground of his being treated according to the infinite worthiness of Christ.

This is God's act—His most marvellous act in His dealings with His creatures. It is not an internal work; it is not God the Holy Spirit's making the sinner, by renewing grace, righteous in heart and disposition. It is God the Father, in the character of the Judge, counting or reckoning righteousness to the believing sinner, the righteousness of another, to stand for him. And that other being a Divine Person, the believer is "made the righteousness of God." Jehovah Jesus is his righteousness. Just as Christ was "made sin" by having sin counted to Him, so is he, in himself unrighteous, made righteousness by having the righteousness of the Surety counted to him. And just as Christ, being "made sin," was "made a curse," suffering the penalty of the law as though He merited it, so is the believing sinner, when made the righteousness of God, delivered from the condemning sentence of the law, and invested with a righteous title to everlasting life, including all that is necessary to fit him for heaven, and the full

enjoyment of God through eternity. He is pardoned, admitted into favour, adopted into God's family; he receives the Holy Spirit as his Guide, and Comforter, and Sanctifier, and obtains an interest in all the promises of the everlasting covenant, each one of them to be fulfilled to him at the best time, and according to his need. "All things are his." "Made the righteousness of God," he can look the holy law in the face, and, while remembering with shame his sins, can rejoice in the hope of a full and righteous reconciliation. "Made the righteousness of God," he, a sinful man, unworthy to lift his eyes to heaven, can yet approach the Holy One with the reverence and trust of a child, and call Him "Father." "Made the righteousness of God," he can venture to hope that his prayers and his services (notwithstanding all his shortcomings and defilements) shall find acceptance with God, and that the Spirit of Christ shall sanctify him wholly. "Made the righteousness of God," he may enter the dark valley without fear, and appear before the great white throne without fear, and enter heaven humbly yet confidently, to take a place nearer the throne than the holy angels, and look forward to an eternity of blessedness, and to being kept from the possibility of falling.

And this act of God needs not to be repeated. It is done "once for all," like the work out of which it grows or on which it is based. Sin is put away, and the believing sinner is as completely in a state of acceptance with God as he will be in heaven. This is a sure truth, and therefore, seeing what a foundation is laid in it for the exercise of hope and joy, we need not wonder that such joy should be in exercise. We should rather expect it, when it is given to one to realize the glory of the righteousness of God, and God's way of accepting sinners in His dear Son. Yet while there is a foundation laid for the con-

tinued and growing exercise of hope and joy to the end, it may be through an inward and unintermitting struggle that one is enabled to exercise the hope of his personal interest in Christ, and of his completeness in Him. It may be, as it is, in connection with watchfulness and prayer and the laborious use of the means of grace—striving in and through them to see Jesus. There can be no assurance of hope except in so far as faith is exercised on the Saviour in the gospel. The faith of yesterday will not avail for to-day, and neither assurance nor faith is a thing which the believer can lay hands on when he pleases. There is enough of such easy assurance and easy faith, deceitful assurance and false faith. The believer feels his need of the putting forth of the power of the Holy Spirit to enable him to see Jesus in the gospel, and to exercise faith in Him for righteousness. And he knows that the assurance and the faith are worthless that would make him less needy and dependent to-day than he was yesterday. One great end of the means of grace is, that through Jesus held forth in them, faith may be exercised afresh on its blessed Object. And we may take it as a sign that we are strangers to Christ and to faith, if, in waiting on the means of grace, we can rest satisfied without such a spiritual sight of Jesus in the Word as encourages us to come to God through Him.

And now, have we been "made the righteousness of God in Christ?" Is this privilege ours? Is the question one of surpassing importance in our estimation and feeling? Can we be at peace without some firm hope of being in a state of acceptance with God? If we do possess such a hope, does it lead us to "purify" ourselves, as He is pure? Oh! how do all the other differences in our circumstances or outward condition, sink into insignificance compared with the difference between being in Christ and

out of Christ! Can we understand Paul's experience, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."[1]

Let believers remember that they are daily to put on Christ for righteousness. This may be said, indeed, to be the main thing in the life of faith; what is necessary to maintain peace, what stirs the soul up to seek after sanctification, as well as what makes use of the strength that is provided in order to the successful following of holiness. "Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength."[2]

Are there any in trouble of mind because of sin—unpardoned, unsubdued sin—seeking rest for their souls? Seek till you find the true rest. Beware of false peace, a peace resting on any inward frames and feelings, a peace attained to without a conscience-reaching view of the blood of Christ. There is true peace, and a way to its enjoyment; and the Holy Spirit is able to lead you in this blessed way.

Finally, "we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." There may be those here to whom this is no "glad tidings," because their consciences are dead, and their hearts cased up in unbelief and worldliness. There will be no dead conscience before the great white throne. Awaken, fellow-sinner, to a sense of the realities of your condition as a condemned man, that you may seek refuge in this glorious righteousness.[3] It is to you; it is for your acceptance, now, that all its blessings may become yours. Reject it, and die without it, and then either Christ must leave His throne of glory, or you must perish.

[1] Phil. iii. 8, 9. [2] Isa. xlv. 24. [3] Isa. xxxii. 2.

SERMON VI.

THE SAVIOUR'S COMPASSION.

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."—LUKE XIX. 41, 42.

IT will be felt that this is sacred ground. Nothing more impressively and solemnly interesting is recorded of our Lord during His sojourn on earth, than His weeping over Jerusalem, except the account of His agony in Gethsemane, and His death on the tree. We never read of our Saviour smiling, but we read of His weeping. He wept over the grave of Lazarus, and over Jerusalem. Our Lord was now entering Jerusalem, as He had never entered it before, in triumph. It was a triumph, indeed, which in its aspect befitted His character as the meek and lowly Jesus; not the triumph of an earthly conqueror, but of a spiritual deliverer, for whose condescension there was no service or condition too low to secure the salvation of sinners and for whose power there was nothing too hard. Just as He tamed the ass's colt and made it submissive to His will, so does He change, by His grace, the spirits of sinful men.

Yet He permitted His disciples to express their joy freely. Nay, He said, in answer to the Pharisees, "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would

immediately cry out." [1] He comes in sight of Jerusalem, and all at once, in the midst of this joy, he stops and weeps. What awakened this deep emotion, and in such measure that it overflowed in weeping? He was now entering the city in triumph: within five short days He was to be led forth from it bearing His cross. One of His own disciples was to betray Him. Wicked hands were to seize Him. And after undergoing every species of insult and reproach, He was to be put to a cruel and shameful death. This He knew. He knew all that awaited Him. Was it then the thought that in so short a time all this suffering should come upon Him? For a mere man it might be natural that such a thought, suggested at such a time, should unman him, and constrain him to weep. But this was not the cause of Jesus' weeping. He thought not of Himself, but of Jerusalem.

"If thou hadst known," or "O that thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes," *i.e.*, you do not and will not know them, and therefore, in a little time, the Lord will give you over altogether to your own hearts' lusts.

The Jewish nation and Jerusalem had enjoyed a long and precious day of visitation. It stretched from the time when God visited them in Egypt till the appearance of Christ himself. During this time God had kept among them, as a peculiar people, His visible church, blessing them with His word, ordinances, and ambassadors. But though He had at all times a people among them, yet as a body, being true representatives of fallen man, they resisted and vexed His good Spirit. Instead of bearing the fruits of righteousness, they bore the grapes of Sodom and the clusters of Gomorrah. Some of His prophets they beat

[1] Luke xix. 40.

and sent empty away, and some they killed. At length the Lord sent His Son to receive the fruits of the vineyard. With His coming the measure of their privileges was filled up to the uttermost, and it was therefore fitting and right that it should be determined whether they should continue still exalted to heaven through bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, or whether, filling up the measure of their iniquity, they should be cast down to hell. They had done much already to solve this question. They had rejected their Messiah. Some of them had said of His miracles, "He hath Beelzebub, he casteth out devils through the prince of the devils;" and some of His personal character, "Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!" "His own" had not received Him.[1] In a few days the cry of "Hosanna to the Son of David!" was to be changed into the cry, "Crucify him, crucify him!" They were to kill the Prince of Life. Another gracious message should be sent from His throne on high, "beginning at Jerusalem." But this too should be rejected; and then, as the limit would be reached which the Divine forbearance could not cross, wrath would come forth against them to the uttermost, and all the threatenings recorded in the word would be executed against them. Beholding then the city, and thinking of its coming destruction, He wept over it.

He saw clearly the guilt of Jerusalem—that all the judgments to come upon it would be a glorious demonstration of the justice and truth of God. Doubtless He saw its especial guilt in rejecting Himself, in hating both Him and His Father. All this He saw in its real character of desperate wickedness; yet, seeing it all, He wept over the city. He saw the certainty of its doom. No visible cloud of judgment was suspended over it, no fears were entertained

[1] John i. 11.

by its inhabitants of approaching danger; but He knew that its sentence had gone forth, he saw the flaming sword stretched out over it. He saw the fearfulness of this doom :—the holy city, where Old Testament saints had worshipped, and, beholding His day afar off, been glad, razed to the ground; its inhabitants visited with a complication of natural miseries such as had never, in equal measure, met before in the case of any people—wasted and destroyed by famine, the sword, and pestilence; and the remnant of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh made a by-word among all nations and driven to the four winds of heaven—not to be restored, as formerly, after a banishment of seventy years, but to wander for centuries among the nations, the monuments of Jehovah's wrath.

But, more than all this, He saw multitudes of immortal souls passing into eternity, with the guilt of His blood upon them, dying in darkness, and cast into outer darkness. And He "would have gathered them."[1] His infinitely compassionate heart told Him how He had sought their salvation. He knew that He had come to them with glad tidings, that He had sincerely and earnestly invited them to the enjoyment of rest, that His mercy had gone out importunately after them beseeching them not to die, that He had spent His strength in labouring among them; and now finding, as it were, this mercy thrown back upon Him, returning to his breast all but empty, because while He would have gathered them they "would not," He wept over their coming ruin.

We must remember that this is very holy and tender ground. It is evident that our Lord's lamentations did not arise from any want of complacency in His Father's will regarding the salvation of some and not of all : "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father,

[1] Luke xiii. 34.

Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes;"[1] or from the want of entire complacency in the threatenings of that law which attaches eternal death to sin; or from any feeling that His own work would be in vain, and that He should not "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied."[2] None of these things are to be understood. But we trace it to the pity and mercy of His heart, overflowing in sorrow in contemplating the misery produced by sin. Unless He had been "the Lamb of God," He could not have been thus affected. It was a part of His humiliation to be "despised and rejected of men." It was a necessary consequence of His purity and love, that this rejection should make Him "a man of sorrows." And it was perfectly consistent with His perfection as God-man that He should weep over the destruction of sinners, while He saw clearly that they merited their doom, and while the foundations of His own happiness should be altogether untouched by the sight of their misery. We see His holy jealousy in the denunciations against the Scribes and Pharisees: "Ye hypocrites, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" We see His complacency in the punishment of the lost, in the words which He tells us He will address to the wicked on that day: "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." We see here the gushing forth of His mercy, the mercy which has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked," the grace and tenderness and love (unselfish, self-sacrificing love) manifested in the whole of His work of humiliation and suffering, and by which He revealed the Father as "love;" mercy and love not the less real but the more wondrous, because in alliance with the purity which hates sin, and the righteousness which cannot spare

[1] Matt. xi. 25. [2] Isa. xlix. 5, 6; John vi. 37; x. 27, 28.

sin. We have the heart of Christ opened up to us, a heart filled with good-will to sinners, with tenderness and compassion; yes, as having as its deepest affection in connection with the glory of His Father, thirst for their salvation; full of grace, pure grace, yet holy grace which cannot desire to be exercised at the expense of righteousness or to screen the guilty. And though every tear has been wiped from His eyes, though His sorrows were over when He said "It is finished," and He is now infinitely exalted above all sorrow, yet His heart is the same—as gracious, and as full of compassion as in the days of His flesh.

Now then, let us notice a few of the truths taught us by Christ's weeping and Christ's words. There are "things which belong to our peace" in this life and in the ages of eternity, which it supremely concerns us to know. Our true peace and happiness depend on our enjoying the favour and friendship of God. If the great "God be for us, who can be against us?" But if He be against us there is no peace to us; and our case is the more affecting and dangerous if we say "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." God alone can make us happy. He only can fill our hearts. By nature God and we are estranged, and His wrath abides on us. But He has devised and revealed a way of reconciliation and return through Jesus Christ, the Son of His love. "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." "The things which belong to our peace" may be said to be the saving knowledge of Christ in its excellency and preciousness, or "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ;" so to know and feel ourselves as lost, so to know Jesus as the way to the

Father, as to trust in Him alone for salvation, and to come to God through Him for mercy, acceptance, and rest, and for grace to live to His glory; so to know Jesus as that He shall be precious to us, and that to us to live shall be Christ—is to "know the things which belong to our peace." And "blessed is the people that know" them. They have peace with God; they have rest to their souls; they may lie down in peace and take quiet sleep, for the Lord maketh them dwell in safety.

There is a "day" in which they may be known, in which pardon and salvation are to be obtained; and during this day the Redeemer uses many means to awaken the sinner, and to lead him to saving acquaintance with the "things which belong to his peace;" seconding the calls of His word with His providence, standing at his door, digging about the barren tree and dunging it. It is the day of *gospel privileges*, when the Sun of Righteousness shines forth in the firmament of the truth, when the Lord sets life and death before us, His terrors and His mercies, and invites us to Himself as the God of peace. Oh, to know the value of the gospel! It is the day of *life*. It is this which gives life its preciousness; that these things may be known, even at the eleventh hour. "All day long" He has "stretched out his hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people," and yet He says, "To-day if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts." But especially it is the day of *youth*. Most of those who now know the Lord savingly were converted in youth. It is the day *when the Spirit of God strives* with the soul. Generally speaking, this is the gospel day; but there are some special times above others when He strives with men. Let all beware of resisting Him now, lest, as has happened to others, He cease to strive with them, and they be left "like heath in the desert, and see not when good cometh."

This day is short and will soon come to a close. At the longest, it is a short day. But its continuance is also uncertain. At any moment it may come to an end. The brittle thread of life may be snapped. "What is our life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." The long-suffering of God may come to an end, or He may "swear in his wrath" that we "shall not enter into his rest." Yet many refuse to know the things that belong to their peace. As it was in Christ's day so is it still. They continue as careless about the soul as though it were in no danger. They refuse to believe God's testimony concerning its lost state, and the way of salvation. They give their hearts and thoughts and energies to this world, as though there were no hereafter. They sleep on in sin, and neglect the great salvation, persuading themselves that they shall "die the death of the righteous," and that their last end shall be like his. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be which find it."

If these things are not known in this world, they will never be known. It is only in this world that the Lord exercises pardoning mercy. "There is no device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest." As the tree falleth, so shall it lie. And if they be not known, what remains but the "judgment" and the "fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries?" The mercy which now says, "Why will ye die?" will not interfere to shield or rescue the sinner from avenging justice. Christ's tears over Jerusalem now assure the most guilt-laden sinner of His readiness to receive him, and that he cannot perish because of want of willingness in Christ to save him.

"And ye will not come to me that ye might have life."[1] But out of the lips of mercy from which the affecting words flowed, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace," will then come forth the awful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

To apply these remarks.

How unspeakable the obligations of those who are brought so to "know the things that belong to their peace" that it were misery to them not to feel the power of a world to come! It is the sufferings and the grace of Christ that have procured for you any hope in looking forward to eternity. Let that thought be precious to you. And oh! by these solemn realities, by the darkness of hell and the glories of heaven and the dying love of Christ, be exhorted to plead and wrestle for the salvation of souls. Bring your hearts to this sight, to a weeping Saviour, till they are fired into a flame of compassion for the souls of perishing fellow-sinners, and you seek to "pluck them as brands from the burning."

How humbling the contemplation of a weeping Jesus to us ministers—even although through grace it be our desire and aim to be faithful and to win precious souls—that, believing in the amazing mysteries of redemption, in the soul's value and the soul's immortality, we are not more solemnly in earnest in speaking the word of life; that we are not now as Jeremiah was, when he said, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" or as Paul was when he said, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." How humbling is the contemplation to

[1] John v. 40.

the Christian, in his most advanced state in this world! And yet, if he is seeking after conformity to the Lamb of God, he will one day be like Him in holy love.

What a rebuke also to unconcern for the soul's salvation, what an awakening call, is here! Was it without a reason, or without a sufficient reason, that the Son of God came to our world, and was a man of sorrows, and died on the tree? Or was it to save the soul He came, and was it over the loss of the soul He wept? Then have you no concern for the salvation of your own soul? will you take no thought about it? Did Christ sweat great drops of blood when He was struggling for its redemption, and are you unacquainted with a single soul-pang or intense striving in reference to it? Did Christ weep such tears as were never shed before, and is it a *fiction* that there is a hell? Fellow-sinners, awaken! The tears of Christ tell you that you have infinite reason to be concerned and to weep for yourself this day. Remember that while the whole of Christ's work casts light on the value of the soul and the greatness of its loss, it has not changed your condition by nature. It has made it possible for you and for me to be saved; but it has not made a natural state less dreadful or dangerous than it was; nay, if you continue Christless and die Christless, it will fare worse with you in eternity than if you had never heard the gospel.

"What meanest thou," then, "O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon" thee, that thou "perish not." I might beseech you, and I do beseech you, to consider that if you are unaffected by the state of your own soul, it is because sin stupifies and Satan blinds you. It is not the less certain that it is a fearful thing to be going on in this state, till the foot slide, and till distress and anguish come upon you; nor is it the less certain that if your eyes were opened, if you believed God, you would

realize it, and be exercised as the Psalmist was exercised: —"The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul." [1] I might beseech you, and I do beseech you, to consider what it will be to have these things "hid from your eyes" for ever, to have the reflection following you to eternity that you perished because you *would not come to Christ.*

But I would rather make use of the *love of Jesus*, as exhibited here, to move, to awaken, to melt, and to draw you. This is the loving Saviour who now invites you—He who wept over His enemies and His murderers. Think what a heaven it must be to be with Him! Think what a hell, were there nothing else in hell, to be separated from Him for ever!

[1] Ps. cxvi. 3, 4.

SERMON VII.

DIVINE LONG-SUFFERING.

"He spake also this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard: and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he, answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."—LUKE XIII. 6-9.

WHILE we cannot doubt that this parable had a primary reference to the Jewish church and people as a whole, yet it is so couched as to isolate every individual in particular; for it is not of a vineyard in general that Christ speaks, but of a "fig-tree planted in a vineyard."

The owner of the vineyard is the Lord. And who is the "dresser?" It seems to us unnatural to apply this to the ministers of Christ, though they have their deep responsibility, "watching for souls as those that must give account;" though, just as they have the spirit of ministers, they "travail in birth till Christ be formed" in their hearers; and though the word ministered by them is not without sure efficacy, either as the "savour of life unto life, or of death unto death." And it is only in a restricted and guarded sense that we can speak of Jesus the Mediator as the dresser: for we must remember that His intercession is never in vain; those for whom *He* intercedes receive

the Holy Spirit to make them fruitful. At the same time it is the work, the death, of Christ that furnishes us with the key to God's government of our world, in which government He exercises forbearance towards all, and gives to many space and calls to repentance, which are made effectual to the saved. Viewed in this light, we may speak of Christ as the dresser of the vineyard.

But, bearing in mind that this is a parable, and that we must never, in interpreting a parable, strain every point or simile, but keep in view the main scope and teaching, it appears to us more natural to view this as similar to the passages in Hosea vi. 4, "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away;" and Hosea xi. 8, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together;" and as designed to bring out the truth and the greatness of the Divine mercy, side by side with the demerit of sin and the righteousness which cannot spare sin. The Lord, speaking after the manner of men, speaks in these passages as though He did not know what to do, as though there were a conflict in His mind between righteousness and compassion (though all is perfect and eternal harmony in the Divine mind);—and why? To help us to understand that as righteousness, infinite righteousness, is an essential perfection of Jehovah, so also is mercy, infinite mercy; that though we may regard them or be in danger of regarding them as conflicting attributes, there is no conflict in the Divine mind, and no conflict in their exercise towards men—the cross having harmonized them; and that when we realize righteousness as condemning us and demanding that we be cut down, we may see it to be

magnified in Christ, and such mercy streaming forth from His cross to us as can remove the guilt of our barrenness, lift us from despair, and make even us fruitful.

It is thus we regard the conference in the parable between the owner and the dresser. And it is not at all inconsistent with this view, to consider the three years spoken of as having a reference to the three years of our Lord's personal ministry, and the year of respite as referring to the time intervening between our Lord's ascension and the destruction of Jerusalem, during which a remnant of the people was gathered in, but the nation as a body, continuing in unbelief, was rejected.

Let us consider the great practical lessons which the parable is fitted and designed to teach us.

It is true of us in general—of some more than others—that we are "a fig-tree planted in a vineyard." Our lot has not been cast in the waste howling wilderness of heathendom, but in a land of Bible light and gospel ordinances. We enjoy the Word of God, the revelation of His will, which makes known to us what God is, and what the way of death and of life is, what the duty is which He requires of us, what is our chief end, and what should most concern and engross us. We have it in our own tongue, with power to search it for ourselves, none hindering us. However little some of us may lay it to heart, the possession of a Bible lays us under deep and tremendous responsibility. Some of us have from our childhood known the Holy Scriptures. Many of us have been favoured with the enjoyment, perhaps from our childhood, of a faithful gospel ministry. All of us have been blessed with Sabbath time and Sabbath opportunities; while some have been the subjects of solemn strivings of the Holy Spirit, and been visited by providences which have brought God and eternity very near to us. And all this has not happened by

chance. It has been an expression of the goodness and goodwill of the Lord to us. For these and similar reasons it may be said, that we are a fig-tree planted in a vineyard.

Now God looks for fruit, corresponding to the labour bestowed upon us, and the means of salvation which we enjoy. Has He given us His word? He seeks the fruit of faith in the word as the word of God; faith evidencing itself to be true by a doing of the word, and especially by a heart reception of the Father's unspeakable gift; "precious faith." Has He set before us in His word the evil of sin, our own sinfulness, and the way to have sin taken away through the application of the blood of atonement? has He invited us through Jesus to return unto Him that we may taste of His graciousness as a Father? He seeks the fruit of repentance. Does He set before us His wondrous love in the death of His Son? He seeks the fruit of love, that we love Him who first loved us; the love which approves itself to be sincere by a keeping of His commandments. He seeks the fruit of self-denial, and humility, and meekness, and heavenly-mindedness, of zeal for His glory, and of well-doing as we have opportunity. It is by such fruit that He is glorified; the fruit which is the effect of union to Christ and of abiding in Him; which is brought forth, through dependence on the grace that is in Christ Jesus and with an eye to His glory, in ever increasing measure, by the trees of righteousness. And to teach us His constant inspection of His visible Church, and His desire for fruit, as well as His holy jealousy, He is represented as coming to seek it.

But there are barren trees in the Lord's vineyard; there are those who bear—not little fruit, but—no fruit. Perhaps there are few who enjoy the Bible and a gospel ministry, on whom there are not, at some time or other, impressions

produced of the reality and importance of Divine things. And, no doubt, the Searcher of hearts sees in His visible Church every form of barrenness, from that of open wickedness to that of almost Christianity. But there are a few great classes into which the barren may be divided. There is the class of open sinners; of those who, professing to believe the Bible, yes, and to call Christ "Lord," are yet plainly the enemies of His Person and of His cross, living in the commission of those things because of which the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience; the impure, the drunkard, the profane, the Sabbath-breaker, the prayerless, and such like; bearing the grapes of Sodom and the clusters of Gomorrah. There is the class of the worldlings; of those who, though they may be free from gross sins and be moral and upright in their conduct, live for this world only, having their hearts in it, and their conversation in it, and their hopes of happiness bounded by it. There is the class of the formalists; who may be said to exhibit a goodly show of leaves; who walk the round of outward observances, attending the means of grace, and perhaps going to a communion table; but who have never been awakened to a sense of the soul's value, to their need of salvation, and of being born again. There is, again, the class of those who exhibit buds and blossoms full of promise, but who bring no fruit to perfection. We read of those who are "ever learning and never able," because never earnestly and with the whole heart desiring, "to come to the knowledge of the truth." They stand at the threshold of the Christian temple; but they refuse to enter in, because the spirituality of the worship repels them, and because in entering they must deny self. And there are those who sin away their convictions and return after a season to their old courses, turning like "the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing

in the mire." Their carelessness and their spiritual insensibility are broken in upon by the awakening word and providence of God, they feel their need of salvation, they listen with eagerness to the word of life, they are driven to prayer; union to Christ seems to be felt by them as the one thing needful, their faces seem altogether turned from the world towards Christ and the heavenly Zion;—but the tempter comes, and the cares or the pleasures of the world, or the lusts of other things come, and the seed is choked. Oh! are there any such amongst *us* of whom the Lord is saying, "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away."[1]

And finally, there is the class of the almost Christians—the foolish virgins[2]—who have a counterfeit faith and hope and repentance and love, and perhaps, while very ready to judge and condemn others, have a confident persuasion of their own safety. Do you tremblingly ask, "Lord, is it I?" If you are not unwilling, but anxious, to be searched by God;[3] if you desire entirely to renounce your own righteousness, and to be found in Christ as your righteousness; if no known duty is habitually neglected by you, and no known sin indulged in; if you desire to find rest for your soul only in Christ, as your dependence and portion and Master; if your quarrel is not with anything in His holy law and holy service, but only with your own cold, and treacherous, and unbelieving heart, then you do not belong to this wretched class of barren professors. But oh! how deceitful is the heart, and how deceitful and stupifying is sin, when, in the face of God's word, we may thus deceive ourselves in a matter of eternal moment; and when, with a condemning

[1] Hos. vi. 4. [2] Matt. xxv. 1-10. [3] Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

heart testifying to our barrenness, we can live on in this condition as though there were no grace in Jesus Christ to make us faithful.

The vine-dresser wondered at the continued barrenness of the fig-tree. So, speaking after the manner of men, the unfruitfulness of the soul in the enjoyment of the means of grace excites the wonder of God. We may think little of these means; but God's thoughts of them are not ours. That His terrors should fail to awaken us, or His mercies to soften and melt us; that we should live as though His word were not true, or as though the grace of redemption laid us under no new obligations to glorify God; that we should continue in this state for many a year, growing more worldly and more hardened the nearer we approach a judgment-seat—this is the mystery of iniquity. "Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none." What hearts must we have, when we can thus requite the Lord!

The barren cumber the ground. They not only wrong their own souls and disfigure the face of the vineyard, but they are mischievous to others, hardening them by their evil example, their coldness and their worldliness, and keeping back the showers of Divine grace. Others in the enjoyment of the same means, in occupying the soil which they cumber, might prove fruitful and blessed trees of righteousness. And so the barren deserve to be cut down. It is of unmerited goodness they have had their place there, not because they were better than others; theirs also is the sin of rejecting and despising mercy, and therefore the desert of the "much sorer punishment." And this may yet more appear, when we consider what is in itself a more grateful, as it is a blessed, object of contemplation, the forbearance of God with them.

The forbearance of God, that gracious property of the

Divine nature, or exercise of the Divine character, in virtue of which He has "no pleasure in the death of him that dieth," is brought out very strikingly here in His general long-suffering towards the impenitent and unfruitful. He comes seeking fruit, after He has spoken to them in His word; He finds none: yet He bears with them. He comes, Sabbath after Sabbath, year after year; and though they cumber the ground, He bears with them still; for His is not the manner of men. Then this forbearance is brought out in the special and successful interposition of mercy pleading for a further respite to the barren tree: "Let it alone this year also," etc. Our position under the gospel is at all times sufficiently solemn—that it must be to us either the gospel of salvation or the occasion of our greater condemnation. To be unfruitful under the means of grace is at all times sufficiently terrible—ever liable to be "cut down." But there are critical times in the sinner's history; times when God "comes down" to inspect him, to see if in righteousness He *can* spare him any longer; times when, if his eyes were opened, the first thought that suggested itself might be, that he had already filled up the measure of his iniquity; times when further space to repent can only be obtained by some new and unwonted exercise of the infinite mercy that resides in God. Who can tell whether such a time has not passed in regard to some one now addressed, and whether the period of respite is not very near a close? Or who can tell whether the solemn conference between righteousness and mercy in regard to some of us may not now be going on? May not righteousness be demanding with a voice of thunder that this or that sinner, who has so long "refused" when God called, so long "disregarded" while the Lord stretched out his hand in warnings and expostulations, should be cut down; while mercy pleads, as only Divine mercy can plead, that, notwith-

standing all, he yet be spared for a little while? "True, most true, he deserves to be cut down; but oh, that soul, capable of such intense suffering or intense joy, is unspeakably precious: even for such a sinner as this did Christ die; and such can He save. Spare him, that I may dig about him; I am not yet weary of this thankless work. My bowels yearn over him; he considers not what he is doing: I will bring yet nearer to his mind and conscience a long-despised Saviour. I will cast him into a furnace of affliction; I will make him to realize, as he has never yet done, how bitter the world is without Christ. Peradventure, he may yet prove a jewel in the crown of Jesus. But if not, then after that thou shalt cut him down."

Doubtless we are taught that sometimes such special means are blessed to the curing of the unfruitfulness of a long barren sinner. Whether he be young or aged, it is with him as with Manasseh; of whom we read[1] that "he humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him;" and then there is joy in heaven and in the church on earth over the repenting sinner; and much being forgiven him, he loves much, while he seeks to tell to others what Christ has done for his soul. But if these means are not blessed, then mercy, continuing to be mercy still, ceases to plead. Mercy is content that justice be executed. The blessedness of the redeemed cannot be affected by the sufferings of the lost. It is out of Christ's blessed lips that the words will proceed, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Let us then be faithful to our own souls. Let us not treat this question as one that does not concern us. Let us ask God to search us. If we were in earnest and faithful, it might not be difficult for some of us to come

[1] 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13.

to know that we are barren trees, who have never brought forth anything to God's glory but have been living as though we were our own. Only, Christians ought to beware of coming to a false judgment in regard to their own case. It is well to be troubled because of little fruit, and to be anxious to bring forth much fruit; but it is not well to conclude that they are wholly barren. It is neither for their fruitfulness nor their peace.

Be anxious to improve the long-suffering of the Lord. It is a wonder to be spared in unfruitfulness. It is a greater wonder that there is hope in Jesus for the unfruitful. His blood can cleanse away this sin. His grace can change the heart. Oh, be anxious to improve the space still given you to repent, lest the sentence be executed, "Cut him down!"

Methinks, if God's word were to take hold of the conscience, there might be among us some such communing with the heart as this: "Is it so that I have been ever cumbering the ground, living, without a sense of responsibility, in unbelief, in impenitence, without love to the Saviour? What a retrospect is presented to me in my past life! and oh, can there be hope that my sin can be pardoned—that I can be blessed with a sense of forgiveness, and that my whole heart can be so changed as that I shall find my happiness in the service and fellowship of Christ?" Yes, the blood of Christ is infinite in efficacy, and His grace is omnipotent. Such were some who, through His merits and grace, were washed, and sanctified, and justified, and are now with Him. But oh, cry to God for His Holy Spirit to deepen these impressions, lest they leave you as you leave His house and return to your dwelling, and you come back to the sanctuary more hardened than before.

I would make use of this subject for stirring up the

young to seek Jesus and converting grace now; that their life may be a blessed one, and that, if God spares them to old age, they may flourish, growing like the palm-tree, and having good hope of the glory of God. It is alike easy to God to convert an aged or a young person; but so far as your experience is concerned, it is much easier for you now to obtain converting grace; and now, now is your time. God has given you a place in His vineyard, and He comes seeking this fruit; that you may say to Him, "My Father, be thou the guide of my youth." Now is the time to seek the Lord, and to pray for the Holy Spirit.

FRAGMENTS.

I. THE PERSONAL MINISTRY OF CHRIST.[1]

THE main employment of Jesus consisted in preaching the gospel. To this His miracles were all subservient. It was most suitable that His public life should thus be spent; that, as He had come into the world to die for sinners—as the preaching of His cross was to be the great means of salvation—He should usher in the proclamation of the joyful sound, and thus consecrate and dignify the ordinance of preaching, and give it perpetual efficacy.

And how otherwise, indeed, could fitting employment be found for the Son of God, when for a time He had to appear publicly before the eyes of men? The Lord had "anointed Him to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord;"[2] and therefore He went about preaching the gospel of the kingdom in the synagogues, in the temple, in the villages, by the way-side, by the sea-shore, in the desert, on the mountain, or in the house, and saying, "He that hath ears

[1] Extracted from a sermon on 1 Pet. ii. 21, preached in one of the earlier years of the author's ministry.

[2] Isa. lxi. 1-3.

to hear, let him hear." He addressed men as sinners, and setting death and life before them, commanded them to repent. He addressed them as the children of Abraham after the flesh, warned them of the danger of trusting in outward privileges and outward connection with God's Church, and exhorted them to seek the "renewal of the Holy Ghost."[1] He proclaimed the will of God by direct authoritative announcement, by parable, by warning, by promise. He proclaimed it in its bearings on all the darkness and corruption of the heart, and on all the fears of the labouring and heavy laden. How precious is the gospel and the gospel ministry, since the great work of the Son of God, when on earth, thus consisted in preaching the gospel.

But who can suitably speak of the preaching of Christ —the matchless graces of the preacher, the celestial purity of His heart, the grandeur of those communications of the Father's will regarding the salvation of men which were made by His only-begotten Son! Who can think aright of the burning zeal and the love of the Redeemer's heart while He fulfilled His ministry, the consuming purity manifested in His denunciations of hypocrisy, or the infinitude of the pity which wept over Jerusalem!

There was a time when the Son of God in human form in very deed dwelt on our earth, a preacher of righteousness. A new experiment was made on the character of the apostasy of man from God, and on its power of resistance. Holy prophets had appeared in preceding ages with unquestionable evidences of having been sent by God. They had called men to repentance, and had left in succession mournful complaints of the unsuccessfulness of their mission. Some of them were mocked, some stoned; most of them had to say, "Who hath believed our report?"[2]

[1] John iii. 3. [2] Isa. liii. 1.

But a greater than all had now appeared—One who not only proclaimed the truth, but who was, in His own person, a spotless reflection of it; One who not only spoke in the power of the Spirit, but to whom the Spirit had been given without measure; One of whom a devoted Enoch, a holy Noah, a believing Abraham, a meek and faithful Moses, and a zealous Elijah, would unite with John in saying, "The latchet of his shoes I am not worthy to unloose;" One not only free from all sinful weakness, but possessed of the uncreated excellences of divinity, veiled and curtained indeed, that their dazzling splendour might not consume sinful men, but appearing in such measure in the human form as to stamp divinity on Him who dwelt in it. Yes, the Creator and Lawgiver appeared in the form of a man, outwardly mean and poor, yet exhibiting the moral beauties of our nature as they had not shone even in Paradise. And He preached peace, and besought men to be "reconciled to God." He spoke plainly, that the most unlettered might know His meaning; solemnly and with authority, that they might be impressed with the danger of refusing instruction; tenderly and affectionately, if so be He might touch and melt their hearts. He spoke of God, in His glory and justice as moral governor, and in His excellence as the sin-pardoning God; of the soul, in its worth; of sin, in its vileness and deservings; of Satan, in his power and malice and success in destroying souls; of hell in its horrors; of heaven in its glories. He spoke, above all, of the mercy of God; and of Himself as the gift of this mercy, the "Bread of Life," the "Fountain of living water," the "Son of Man" who had come "to seek and to save that which was lost." He invited the lost children of men to come to Him. He addressed himself to their understandings, their consciences, their hopes and fears and desires, in the way of all others best fitted to

instruct, to awaken, to reach the very depths of the soul and its hidden springs of action. And He did this, not for a Sabbath or a week, but for years. He spent His strength in the work. He sat down, so to speak, before the heart of man, and used the best possible means for bringing it to surrender to God. And what was the result? Did it yield? Did the whole body of His hearers cast down the weapons of their rebellion? Did the whole people of the land turn to the Lord, rending their hearts? Oh, how affecting the complaint of the Son of God! "I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought and in vain;" "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."

Do you ask, What is the application of this fact of the heart of man standing out against the Son of God? We answer, Contemplate the fact, and it will work its application in your soul: it will show you what kind of heart you have; it will lead you to wonder at the riches of redeeming love; it will make you a willing debtor to great and sovereign mercy.

And learn also from this result of the preaching of the Son of God, that the work of the Holy Spirit, to make Christ's death effectual, is a necessary and blessed part of the arrangements of the covenant of peace.

II. THE MINISTRY OF ONE OF CHRIST'S SERVANTS.[1]

Were our relation to that honoured servant of God, who has been removed from the services of the sanctuary below to those of the temple above, other than it is, we might—

[1] Extracted from a sermon on Micah vi. 9, preached on occasion of his father's death in 1831.

not as glorying in man, but as testifying of the Lord's goodness, and as seeking fully to estimate the loss we have sustained—speak of the gifts and graces with which he was furnished, so as to be an able and a faithful minister of the New Testament. We might speak of his love to his work, so that he could say that he felt often, "while declaring from this place Christ's unsearchable riches, as if he had already entered heaven." We might speak of the consecration of his whole soul to it, so that the news of a repenting sinner was sweeter to him than any earthly blessing. We might speak of him as one who declared the whole counsel of God, who pleaded his Master's cause with the dignity and the boldness, the fervour and the unction of one who received on each successive Sabbath his commission to go forth as *His* ambassador; who felt the value of his commission, the constraining influence of redeeming love, and the worth of immortal souls. We might speak of the clearness, the plainness, the fulness, and the richness of his exposition of Divine truth, and of his careful application of it to the heart and conscience. We might speak of the sum and substance of his preaching, Jesus Christ and Him crucified, salvation by grace but salvation from sin, the grace of God bringing salvation and teaching men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. We might speak of him as of one who was pre-eminently qualified to speak "a word in season to him that is weary;" who delighted in endeavouring to discharge the commission, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God." We might speak of the solemnity of his appeals to the conscience, of the tenderness of his expostulations with unbelieving, unaffected sinners, and of the earnestness with which he besought the people of God to walk worthy of their high vocation. We might speak of him as of one

whose heart's desire and prayer was that you should be saved, and who had no greater joy than that believers should walk in truth. We might speak of him, too, as of a watchman who lifted up his voice not uncertainly, who gave timely and solemn warning of approaching danger; who mourned over prevailing ungodliness and iniquity; who was grieved for the afflictions of Joseph; whose love embraced all who loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity; who studied the signs of the times, and looked anxiously beyond his own immediate charge to his Church, his country, and an ungodly world; who rejoiced in the prosperity and wept over the desolation of Jerusalem, and who prayed fervently for the universal diffusion of the gospel, and the begun universal reign of the King of Zion.

We might follow him to his intercourse with society and the world, we might speak of his anxiety to be all things to all men, that he might win some, and recommend Christ's gospel; and yet of his carefulness to keep his garments unspotted from the world; and we might appeal to you whether the words of the apostle were inapplicable to him, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe."[1]

We might follow him to his family, and speak of the living exhibition which he gave of the power of true religion, of its influence on the heart and the life, of the holiness of walk and heart, frame and deportment, produced by it; of the steady progress of the Divine life in the soul, and specially of that humility and tenderness of conscience that led the same holy apostle to say, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of

[1] 1 Thess. ii. 10.

all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

We might speak of his exercises of soul in his closet, where he poured forth his soul before God, where—examining his heart and bewailing his unprofitableness, and yet conscious that he was no hireling—the pathetic complaint was often made "Who hath believed our report!" where he mourned in the heaviness of his soul over prevailing lukewarmness and ungodliness, and shed bitter tears over those who refused to receive his message.

And we might follow him still further to his sick-bed, and, as it then seemed, his death-bed, where he charged us, who tremble while we state it, to declare to you, that the very truths which he had preached for thirty years were his stay, his support, and his joy in contemplating eternity and the account of his stewardship which he had to render. All this we might, and we do, speak of; and we doubt not that the feelings awakened by such recollections in the breasts of many of you are akin to those which burst forth from the overcharged heart of Elisha in the words, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!"

SECOND DIVISION.

THE GREAT CHANGE.

SERMON VIII.[1]

THE EXTINCTION OF THE OLD LIFE.

"For I was alive without the law once; but, when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."—ROM. VII. 9.

DOUBTLESS the apostle Paul here alludes to the memorable three days and nights which he spent in Damascus, when he was conducted blind into the city after having seen the Lord Jesus. Never was there a more thorough revolution of sentiment, feeling, and aim than what then took place in him. Saul the proud Pharisee became Saul the broken-hearted publican. What things were gain to him, those he counted loss for Christ.

The mental process through which he passed is one through which, in substance, every subject of Divine teaching passes. Not that it may be equally marked and defined in all; not that there is any particular measure of anxiety or concern which is necessary to be undergone by every sinner seeking a Saviour, or seeking after peace with God; not that there is any fixed time, be it shorter or longer, during which the soul must be under what is termed "law-work;" not that there are not diversities of operations in the mode of the blessed Spirit's dealing with souls whom He draws to the Saviour; but that there is a life which every natural man lives without the law, that must be extinguished, that must go out or expire in

[1] Dated December 1844.

order to his welcoming and embracing Christ and His salvation.

I. The words may therefore be viewed as describing, first, the state of the unawakened, unconvinced sinner. He is "without the law."

He is without the true knowledge of the law. He may know the letter of it better than Saul did before his conversion. But he does not apprehend how spiritual God's law is, for he does not apprehend the spirituality of the Lawgiver. He does not apprehend how holy God's law is, for he does not apprehend the holiness of the Lawgiver. He does not apprehend how just and unchangeable the law is. He does not apprehend that in all these respects it is the transcript of the Divine image, and that the power with which it is clothed to secure its rights is the power of omnipotence. I do not say that his want of the true knowledge of God's law is not his sin; but that, ignorant of God, and having fearfully loose and mistaken views of the Divine character, he has similar views of God's law also.

And he does not experience the power of the law, either in detecting sin, or in filling him with anxiety because of sin. It does not so apprehend him in conscience as a transgressor as that he cannot shake off its grasp. Not that the law is to blame. Did he give it the homage that is its due, did he believe its threatenings with an unhesitating faith, nay, did he truly seek to know how it addresses itself to him, he would soon feel its power. But he does not desire this knowledge. He "loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil."

Therefore he is "alive." He is whole and clean in his own sight. He thinks himself a good and righteous man. If he confesses that he is a sinner, it is a mere lip confession; his heart is unbroken while he makes it; or if he believe in some measure that he needs mercy, yet he thinks

that with Christ's help he can save himself at any time. So he is at ease, and secure. Mount Sinai's thunders do not alarm him. The guilt of rejecting a crucified Saviour does not lie heavy upon him; or if he should have an occasional fear for the state of his soul, and occasional alarm for the state of his soul, yet this is "the morning cloud and early dew" which passeth away. The wound is only skin deep, and therefore easily healed; a good resolution, a prayer, or a good work can close it up for the time. For it is another melancholy feature of the life which he lives "without the law," that it is a life of false, and therefore of vain hope. He hopes that it will be well with him in the end. Either he thinks that he is a Christian—in Christ, while he is not, and while he rests on something of his own to the rejection of Christ's righteousness; or he hopes that he will be in Christ before he die, though he neglect Christ and the great salvation now. "The strong man armed keepeth his palace, and his goods are in peace."[1] This is the case of multitudes under the gospel. How awful! Yet, blessed be God, not desperate. Who more incredulous than Saul of Tarsus, that ever his views and feelings would be revolutionized?

II. The words of the text describe, secondly, the state of the convinced sinner, or the change of view and feeling produced by the coming of the commandment, that is, by the application of the law to the conscience.

This is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is in His hands alone that truth can enlighten the understanding, or effectually arouse and convince the slumbering conscience. "When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."[2] He works first as the Spirit of bondage; then as the Spirit of adoption. The coming of the commandment then, is the unfolding to

[1] Luke xi. 21. [2] John xvi. 8.

the sinner of the true nature of God's holy law, in its spirituality, purity, and justice, speaking to him as a transgressor; and the bringing of his mind and conscience under the power of its commanding and condemning authority, so that his mistaken and dishonouring views of it are removed, and that he cannot put it away, or make his escape from it any more. And there are these two things in the law which give it its power, and which, when realized by the sinner, constrain him to acknowledge its power. There is first its demand of perfect obedience—of obedience spotless, entire, continued—the obedience of the whole man, so that it can demand nothing less, and can accept nothing else. This is a truth which, it is to be feared, has never been learned by many professing Christians. But surely the true nature of sin, as the transgression of the law, cannot be learned without it. There is, further, its right to condemn to death, to denounce its awful curse against the sinner—"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;" so that the sinner is under its condemnation, and "the wrath of God abideth on him."

When the commandment thus "comes," the effect is that "sin revives." There is a charge of guilt planted in the conscience, which now tells the sinner that he is a transgressor of the law of the great God, who is "a consuming fire;" that he has been a transgressor from the womb; that he has to do with justice; and that justice brings him in guilty. Conscience presents God as near. It tells him, not in a whisper, but with a voice of thunder, that he has the anger of the living God to dread, of that God with whom evil cannot dwell; that he has it to dread for sin; for sins countless as the sand on the sea-shore, sins as scarlet and as crimson; for contempt of God, rebellion against Him, rejection of His Son, resisting of His

Spirit. Oh now! what shall he do? "Whither shall he go from his Spirit, or whither shall he flee from God's presence?"

There is a discovery of sin. Formerly, it was wholly concealed as to its real character and extent. But now, when conscience is wakened up, sins long buried rise up again fresh in his view, as still unpardoned and still to be reckoned for—the sins of childhood, thought lightly of when committed, and the sins of riper years. We have a remarkable illustration of the working of conscience in this respect, in the case of Joseph's brethren when in prison. "And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us."[1] And now, when the light of the law's holiness has penetrated his dark heart, sin is detected where it formerly lay hidden. It is not a fair outside, it is not the semblance of goodness, that will satisfy the law. The light of truth is now cast on his whole past life. The mask is stripped from the false, hypocritical heart. Everything is seen in a new light. Everything is tried in a new balance, the balance of the sanctuary. Viewed in that light, his whole past life is seen to have been "without God," and therefore to have been sin. Tried in that balance, his best actions are found to be wanting, his best works are found to be dead works savouring of the putrefaction of the grave. And has he no plea to put in in arrest of justice? no excuse to offer by way of extenuating his guilt? or is there no fair spot on which his eye can still rest with some measure of complacency? No. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying

[1] Gen. xlii. 21.

sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." The understanding is darkness, the conscience defiled, the heart is evil. "Unclean, unclean," is his cry.

The very attempt to cleanse his heart and to subdue his iniquities serves but to discover the more the strength of the chains in which he is held by sin. For the power of sin is now discovered in its opposition to the law. Formerly sin lay, in a great measure, torpid. There was nothing to disturb it as it lay concealed in the dark chambers of imagery, nothing to awaken and call forth its venom. Under cover of its deceitfulness, the sinner with a fair outside might proceed unchecked in the broad way, saying, "Peace, peace, when there was no peace." But now, the unwelcome intrusion of God's law constrains sin to show itself, and to manifest its real character. "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" is its cry. The very strength of the barrier which conscience now raises, not simply against open sin, but against heart sin, serves but to manifest the strength of sin the more; it bids defiance to every such barrier; it must rage, and it must have vent. All the pride and latent enmity of the heart are awakened against that law which nothing but its due will satisfy, which cannot admit of any compromise, which can make no allowance for the weaknesses of the flesh, which demands full satisfaction and cannot receive less, which calls for the humbling of man's loftiness and the laying low of his proud looks, that he may assume his true place—that of a criminal who has sinned without cause and who deserves to die. Hence it not unfrequently happens that persons in this state of mind are tortured at times with the most awful thoughts of God and of the things of God. And they are ready to conclude, as sin is revealing itself to them, that matters are getting worse and worse with them; and they

approach even to despair. These are the sufferings of a wounded spirit; and it, "who can bear?"

The effect of this discovery of sin through the commandment is, that he who was once alive now dies. He cannot any longer think himself righteous; for he has discovered that he is unrighteous and unholy. He cannot any longer flatter himself in his own eyes; for he has discovered that he has ever been under the power of the heart's deceitfulness. He cannot any longer feel at ease, nor can he seek relief in forgetting his misery, while God's arrows are within him, and while his sore runs. He cannot any longer entertain the hope which he entertained before; for the refuges of lies have been swept away. He cannot snatch at peace or comfort *anyhow;* for he feels that he has to build for eternity, and that there is but one hope that will endure the fiery trial. Nor can he receive peace even from the Word, until God himself apply it.

It may not indeed be without a keen struggle that he is thus brought to Jehovah's footstool. It may not be till after he has used every possible means to prop up his vain hope; first seeking to rest in external reformation, then in his diligence and earnestness in seeking salvation, then in his repentance (so called), as though he could thus qualify himself for mercy; till all refuge fails him. And then he would indeed sink into despair; but, while he may be ready even to lie down in his misery, and while the tempter's voice may whisper, "There is no hope," He who came "to seek and to save that which was lost," the good Samaritan, passes by; and the "time is a time of love." He casts His skirt over him; He reveals himself through the truth as the Saviour of the lost, the Surety of the guilty, in whom the law has received the satisfaction which it sought and through whom it has been magnified, whose blood can wash, whose righteousness can cover,

whose grace can renew and sanctify. And now this is to the soul as life from the dead.

In endeavouring to apply the doctrine of the text, let it be rightly understood. We do not affirm that there is anything spiritually good in the sinner until he is united to the Saviour. We do not affirm that it is not his immediate duty to believe in Christ, nor that his unbelief is not his sin—nay, the chief sin with which he is chargeable.[1] We do not say that the Lord, the Spirit, may not so open his heart as He opened the heart of Lydia, and so deal with him that the truth of his lost estate in himself, and the truth of salvation for him in Christ, may be received by him in almost immediate succession, so that, ere ever he is aware, the deep sense of guilt and wretchedness gives way to gladness of heart in finding a Saviour. We dare not limit God. Nor do we forget that there are those who are sanctified even from the womb, or who are drawn in early life to Him who says, "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me." But what we affirm is, that in the very nature of things a sinner cannot receive Christ unless he know and feel himself to be a sinner in the solemn Scripture sense of the term; and that it is the office of the Holy Spirit, in leading the soul to Christ, to produce this conviction. The question then is not, Have we passed through the definite mental process described here? but, Have we been led out of self to Christ? Our natural views of sin are altogether false and defective: have we discovered this? We cling by nature to something of our own: have we discovered this? We are strangers by nature to the evil of the heart: have we made acquaintance with it? We may profess by nature to believe in the sovereignty of Divine grace in the salvation of sinners; but this is all: have we made practical acquaintance with

[1] John xvi. 9.

this solemn doctrine? Have we found ourselves to be lost, and, as such, have we come to the Saviour?

Are there those then who are entire strangers to such exercises of soul, who never even seriously examine into the ground of their hope for eternity; who have found it easy to obtain, and find it easy to maintain, peace of conscience; who have never really looked God's holy law in the face, never read in it their own condemnation, never found relief in that righteousness which has for ever satisfied it; who are settled on their lees? Oh! what need that the commandment should come to them to waken up sin, ere sin waken up when there will be no blood to pacify the guilty conscience, and no grace to change the heart.

Are there those with whom the Spirit is striving, to whose conscience the holy law has really come, who feel uneasy, very uneasy, under a begun sense of sin, and who are afraid of feeling more of it, lest, as they think, all their peace should for ever be taken away? Oh! let them beware. There is a busy tempter who would have them choose darkness rather than light, who is ready to heal their wound *slightly*.

Or are there those here who have been more deeply wounded, against whom the terrors of God have been setting themselves in array, and who have been made to possess the sins of their youth, but who have not been led with their burden to the Lamb of God? Oh! let them, too, beware of crouching under their burden, as though the sense of sin were a something which could qualify them for mercy. Let them, too, beware of the wiles of the devil. Oh! let them flee to Jesus.

Is there one here who may be ready to say, "Woe is me, what shall I do? Once I thought I was in the fair way to heaven, but now I find that I have been ever in the broad way. Once I thought that I could do much in

the matter of my soul's salvation; that I could master the Bible whenever I seriously applied my mind to it; that I could cleanse my heart; that I could watch and pray and keep my heart too. But now I find that I am guilty and lost, and vile; my sins are as a heavy burden, too heavy for me to bear—most of all, the sin of rejecting a Saviour. And yet so hard is my heart, that it refuses to melt. So bound am I with the chain of sin, that were heaven to be won by one pure prayer, I should be for ever without. I try to pray, but I cannot pray. I try to read and to hear; but there is no light for me in the blessed book of life; it falls upon me as the rain upon the rock! And time is hastening on, and eternity is near. Oh! what shall I do?" What shall you do, poor soul? "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no Physician there?" Is there no hope in Israel for such a case as yours? Yes, what shall you do but cast yourself, as lost, at the feet of Jesus, saying, "If I perish, I perish." Delay not then to repair to Him. Dishonour not His grace. Doubt not His power or His love. What is the salvation which you need? Is it a full salvation, a salvation glorifying to God, and suited to all the extent of your malady and all the depth of your guilt and woe? It is to be found in Him. Is it a free salvation? It is to be found in Him. He is "mighty to save;" and He came "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

SERMON IX.

THE NEW LIFE.

"I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God."
GAL. II. 19.

THESE words may be viewed as descriptive of the further carrying out of the mental process or change represented in the passage which formed the basis of the preceding discourse.

I. In inquiring, first, what is meant by being "dead to the law," let it be observed that it is not mainly, far less exclusively, of the ceremonial law, but chiefly of the moral law, that the apostle here speaks; that law the righteousness of which Moses thus describes, that "the man which doeth those things shall live by them,"[1]—the law of works, or the law in its covenant form. It is of great importance that the distinction be understood between the law as a covenant and the law as a rule of obedience. The law has assumed its covenant form in consequence of the sovereign appointment of God; but it belongs necessarily to the law, from the nature of God and of His rational creatures, that it be in all circumstances binding as a rule of obedience. The law as a covenant, as originally given, promised life to Adam on condition of perfect obedience, and threatened death as the punishment of disobedience. And now it adjudges the sinner as a sinner to punishment. The law

1 Rom. x. 5.

as a rule sets before the believer how he is to walk, not so as to procure life, but so as to glorify God. He is delivered from it as a covenant; but he cannot be delivered from it as a rule. It is his happiness and privilege to be under it as the law of Christ.

Being "dead to the law" implies two things.

1. Deliverance from its *condemning authority*. The sinner by nature is under its awful curse: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."[1] This curse abides upon him, and binds him over to the full endurance of the penalty, unless the Lawgiver deliver him from it; for it is this curse which is taking effect, and will take effect, in the punishment of the lost through eternity. And who can tell what Divine wrath is? Who can tell what it is to suffer "the vengeance of eternal fire?" To be "dead to the law" implies then deliverance, full and eternal deliverance, from the curse of the law. This is the privilege of the believer, through union to Christ the Surety; for "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;"[2] and therefore "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;"[3] and they have a full warrant to say, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."[4] It must also be observed, that the believer is delivered from the *commanding* authority of the law *as a covenant*:—that is, while he is under it as a rule, while he is under unchanging obligations to love the Lord with all his heart, and all his soul, and all his strength, and all his mind; and while he

[1] Gal. iii. 10. [2] Gal. iii. 13. [3] Rom. viii. 1. [4] Rom. viii. 33, 34.

is exhorted to be "perfect, even as his Father which is in heaven is perfect," yet perfect obedience is no longer demanded of him as the condition of life. He has already obtained a title to life in that perfect and infinitely meritorious righteousness which has magnified the law—a title which will be acknowledged on the great day. And now his relation to the law is changed through his interest in the Surety's righteousness. He is dead to it as a covenant; and while it as a covenant will live and put forth its power through eternity, yet to him it is dead. Now, this is the common privilege of believers,—alike the privilege of all, of the weak in faith and the strong in faith, of the babe and of the perfect man; there is no difference. And in so far as they realize it as their privilege, they will cease to be afraid of the law as a covenant; they will be lifted above servile fear when they can say, "It is Christ that died."

2. Being "dead to the law," implies, secondly, a ceasing to *expect life from it* or to look to it for life. Once it was far otherwise. It is one of the strange ways in which the mystery of iniquity in the heart shows itself, one of the strange aspects that the deceitful heart assumes, that while the sinner lies under the curse of the law and is morally unable to yield any true obedience to it, still his desire is to it, he looks to it for protection and life,—that is, he trusts in something of his own in the shape of obedience, rather than in Christ. But the believer in Jesus has abandoned every such ground of trust, and made the righteousness of the Redeemer his only refuge. I do not say that he will not feel the workings of self-righteousness and of pride—nay, that this is not a main part of the "body of sin and death" under which he groans, and with which he must conflict to his dying day; but I say that to all the suggestions of this accursed principle, and of Satan speaking through it, his renewed nature will reply, "God

forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. In the matter of my acceptance with God, I cast everything from me, that I may be found in Christ." And the greater his advances in holiness, and the more enlarged his views of the preciousness of the Spirit's work in sanctifying the soul, the more will he enter into the feelings of Paul, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him."[1] Now it is probable that, this sense of being "dead to the law" is what the apostle had here specially in view.

II. It will be observed that there is a manifest and wide distinction between the two things which we have mentioned as implied in being dead to the law. There is indeed an inseparable connection between them, as we shall notice; but they are carefully to be distinguished. The one regards the hold which the holy and righteous law has over the sinner, and the letting go of that hold only in the way of righteousness; the other regards the cleaving of the sinner by nature to the law, and his letting go his hold of it, or ceasing to look to it for life. By keeping these distinctions in view, we shall be enabled to understand in what sense it is that *through the law* the believer has become dead to the law.

In regard to the first thing—deliverance from subjection to it as a covenant—it is evident that it is not through the law that this is effected, but through the gospel, "the ministration of the Spirit" revealing and applying Christ's perfect surety-righteousness, and interesting the sinner in it, through faith. The work of the law is ended when it

[1] Phil. iii. 8.

brings in the sinner guilty. It has no tidings to tell of mercy or of pardon.

But, in regard to the second thing, namely, a ceasing to look to the law for life, it is through the law that this is effected. God's law has important work to do, without which death to the law, in the twofold sense of the term, will not be brought about. It has to slay false hope, to produce despair of deliverance through the law. We endeavoured to explain in the preceding discourse how, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, it produces this result; how, unfolding its spirituality and purity, the extent of its requirements and its awful sanctions and unchangeableness, it apprehends the sinner as guilty, and convinces him of his universal sinfulness; till, sin thus reviving, he dies. And what a merciful result is this, if without this a Saviour will not be valued! The law does not point the sinner to the remedy; but it says to him, "If you seek life, it is not here you can obtain it," and it drives him from the false refuges in which he would otherwise perish. And what merciful work is this! —especially when we consider that the law is handmaid to the glorious gospel of peace and liberty and joy; and that the gospel stands by, as it were, to point the law-pursued sinner to Him who is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Hence we learn that law and gospel must be preached in their connection with each other. For it is ignorance or dishonouring thoughts of God's law that lead a sinner to have any confidence in the flesh; and it is the doctrine of faith alone that establishes the law. We learn also that a sinner sins grievously against his own soul when he turns away from, or refuses, the knowledge of sin through the law. It is as much as to say that he will not be saved, that he will not escape from the law's curse. How many are there who thus sin against their own souls, who

reject that painful (it may be), humbling (it must be), yet salutary, knowledge of themselves, without which all the grace of the gospel will be unknown and unfelt by them.

III. But I proceed to consider, thirdly, the connection between being "dead to the law," and "living unto God." If believers are completely and for ever delivered from condemnation, yet they are not without law to God. The interests of righteousness and holiness do not suffer through their release from the law as a covenant. The grace of God leads not to licentiousness. Men may malign it as they please: and men may wonder at the statements that there can be no holiness, no living unto God, until one is dead to the law; but so it is. There *can* be no holiness until one is "dead to the law:" for the curse abides on the person; and can the service be accepted? There can be no living unto God: for this awful curse shuts out all Divine influences from the soul; the heavens above are as iron and the firmament as brass; none of the heavenly dew descends upon the unblessed heart. There may indeed be the semblance of holiness. There may be the obedience of servile fear. What will not a sinner, under the pressure of a guilty conscience, do? He will compass sea and land, he will fast, and labour, and toil, and part with all; but one thing he will not do, namely, come as a lost sinner to the Saviour. There may be the obedience of selfish hope—the hope of bribing justice, of softening God's heart into pity, of recommending himself to His favour. But this will be all. There will not be one true outgoing of the heart after God. Guilt, guilt must be purged away, and the principle of a new life must be implanted, ere there will be any living unto God.

We have already observed, that it is through the gospel, revealed and brought home to the soul by the Holy Spirit, that the sinner, believing in Jesus, is delivered from con-

demnation. As it is the work of the Spirit who glorifies Christ to convince a sinner of sin, so it is His work to show him "the things of Christ." As it is His work to produce death through the law, so it is His work to give life through the gospel. As in His hands the law puts forth its power in awakening the slumbering conscience and in bringing the lofty imaginations low, so in His hands, who enlightens the dark understanding in the knowledge of its mysteries and renews the stubborn will, the gospel puts forth its power in purging and pacifying the guilt-laden conscience, in giving hope on the very brink of despair, and in drawing to the Saviour. It is the glory of the gospel that it makes known salvation through a crucified but risen Saviour,—who being "made under the law" as a covenant that He might fulfil it in its precept and its penalty in the room of sinners, was obedient unto death and brought in everlasting righteousness. It makes known Christ as Jehovah the Righteousness of sinners, and as Jehovah their Life in whom the fulness of the Spirit dwells. It makes known Christ to be believed on and received by sinners. And Christ invites sinners to come to Him; the Father commands them to come; it is declared that all things are ready; yea, it is made known as the sin of sins that sinners will not come to Christ that they may have life. When, therefore, the gospel comes, "not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," to the self-condemned and self-despairing sinner; when the Person and the work of Christ begin to be opened up to him; when the suitableness, and fulness, and absolute freeness of the great salvation begin to be perceived by him—a free salvation from wrath and from sin for the chief of sinners; and when the love of the Saviour in the invitation even to those who have long rejected Him, and the authority of the Father in the command, meet in his con-

science; when the truth as it is in Jesus, or rather Jesus in His truth, puts forth His power, and the question to be answered is, "Will he have this Saviour to be his Saviour," he is under a blessed necessity of acquiescing in the wondrous proposal; he says, "Yea, Lord; for thou hast made me willing;" and, ere he knows it, he is in Christ.

In Christ. Blessed words! The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him and counted as his, and therefore he is delivered from condemnation. The law has no further claim on him; the Surety has answered all. In Christ—the sentence of condemnation, which shut out every gracious communication from his soul, is for ever removed. He is "blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus." He is blessed with acceptance, blessed with peace with God, blessed with adopting love. He is blessed also with saving and sanctifying grace. The law, from which as a covenant he is delivered, is now, as a rule, written on his heart. "I will put my laws into their minds and write them in their hearts."[1] The Spirit of Christ, poured out upon him to lead him to the Saviour, now enters his heart to dwell there as the Purifier and the Sanctifier. The exceeding great and precious promises now become his—the promises of preserving grace, of growth in grace, of grace and glory. And it is said to him, "Thou art bought with a price; therefore glorify God, in thy body and in thy spirit, which are God's."[2]

Now it is when, under the influence of the love of Christ shed abroad in the heart, the redeemed sinner—redeemed by grace and standing by grace—says, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" that there is what we call the first manifestation of the new and blessed life, the living unto God.

[1] Heb. viii. 10. [2] 1 Cor. vi. 20.

The nature of this life, the Christian's hidden life on earth, is opened up in the verse that follows, every clause of which is full of precious truth:—"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." It is a life of which Christ may be said to be the essence, a life by which the Christian is distinguished from his neighbour, and a life by which he is now distinguished from the holy angels. As it is from Christ that it is derived, so it is He who maintains it; nay, it is not the believer who lives, but "Christ liveth in him." It is a life, therefore, which consists much in faith in, and love to, an unseen Saviour—yet a really present Saviour. It is the life of a needy sinner (for the Christian continues to be a sinner to his last hour) on the Saviour as his light, his hope, his strength, his joy, his all. It is the life of an empty creature on the Saviour's fulness. It is the life of drawing near to God in Christ to taste that He is gracious, to know Him as his shield and his exceeding great reward, to behold His glory and thus to be changed into the same image. It is the life of walking with God in Christ in the narrow way, enduring as seeing Him who is invisible. It is the life of supreme regard to His authority, of concern for His honour, and devotedness to His glory. It is often, in the estimation of God's children, a languishing life,—its pulse beats feebly; it is a suffering life,—temptation and indwelling sin and the needed fatherly chastisement render it so: but yet it is a life that will never die. And the pantings of heart after the living God[1] will be fully and for ever satisfied in perfect conformity to His image, and in the full enjoyment of His fellowship.

[1] Ps. xlii., lxiii.

And now, in applying the doctrines of this verse, we observe that they are not doctrines of little moment, or truths which it is not of much importance whether we remember them or not. They are eminently practical truths, truths vitally connected with the cleansing of the conscience. And by those who have felt the anguish of a guilty conscience, or who are struggling after holiness, they will be acknowledged to be most precious truths.

Among other things we may learn, first, the opposition between works and grace, between a cleaving to the law and a cleaving to the gospel. We cannot hold to both. We cannot blend the two in the foundation of our hopes of acceptance. The old foundation must be thoroughly razed; otherwise grace is no more grace.

Secondly, if there can be no holiness while we remain under the law, then let the question of our acceptance with God be *first* settled. There are some who are awakened to a sense of the necessity of undergoing some great decided change ere they can see the Lord, they feel that they are not what God's Word declares His people to be, they see not as *they* are described to see, they feel not as *they* are described to feel, they are not Bible Christians; and therefore they are earnest in seeking after such a change; they pray, and read, and examine themselves, and watch and endeavour to resist sin. And it is well to be in earnest, solemnly in earnest, in such a matter. What has ever been got without this! It is well to feel that the well-being of the soul is the first concern. It is well to begin to lay to heart the necessity of a great spiritual change; and it is well to pray and to use all the means of grace. But if all this earnestness is to issue in any real fruit, rather if it is not to be all thrown away, there

is a question which must be entertained, and which must be paramount—What is my relation to God's holy law? how does God's law address me as a transgressor? God is just, and I have to deal with Him as a Judge for the pardon of my sins and the acceptance of my person. This is the matter which must obtain the ascendancy in the thoughts and desires. This is the matter which God's Spirit, when He comes, keeps in the sinner's view: and while He keeps it in his view, the sinner is not the less earnest; he does not pray less, or watch less; he prays more, he prays from a deep sense of misery; and yet he learns increasingly that all his earnestness and all his prayers cannot avail anything towards procuring his acceptance with God; he learns increasingly that all his righteousnesses are but filthy rags; he learns increasingly that if he find mercy he must obtain it as sovereign mercy. Oh! then, let this be your aim, let this be your first business. Rest not till you find peace with God, through the blood of His dear Son. Rest not till you see *love* and *grace* in that face which may now seem covered with a frown. Once accepted in the Beloved, and the sanctification of your nature is secured. But out of Christ there is only condemnation.

Finally, is it the believer's privilege to be "dead to the law," and is there such a connection between being "dead to the law" and "living unto God?" then if the believer would live to God, let him labour to know this as his privilege. Much of his comfort, much of his strength and growth, depend upon this. Why is it that he is often in such doubt on this point, that he cannot realize this privilege as his, or that he realizes its preciousness so feebly? A blacksliding heart may have something to do with it; the power of temptation, or God's special dealings with him, or the want of a clear view of the provisions of

the covenant of grace, may all have to do with it. But is there not one cause above others for it? his comparatively dim views of the perfection of the Redeemer's sacrifice, or his losing the conscience-reaching, the heart-melting, the soul-humbling view of the cross of Christ. Did he take in more of the completeness of Christ's work, were his eye more steadily fixed on the cross, surely he would take in more of the completeness of Christ's people in Him, and he would be able oftener to use the blessed language—lightly or ignorantly used by some, but oh, how precious!—"who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*." And would this assurance puff him up? Would he be the less afraid of sin because he saw its evil in Christ's sufferings and Christ's love? Or would he be the less anxious to live to his glory because he could say, "who gave himself for *me*, an enemy and a rebel, a despiser of His person, a rejector of His salvation, a long-unfruitful tree cumbering the ground?" O believer, are you humbled because of your little growth in grace? Are you ashamed of the unsteadfastness of your walk with God? Would you live to God? Then aim increasingly at living by the faith of His Son; then employ increasingly the blessed Spirit of all grace to show you the things that are Christ's—the glory of His Person, the preciousness of His blood, and the riches of His love. If you would grow in humility, it must be in this way. It must be a believing contemplation of the Saviour that will produce it. If you would grow in repentance, and self-denial, and deadness to the world, it is this that will produce it. If you would be changed into the image of the Lord, it is this alone that will produce it. Oh! then, seek to dwell in view of Calvary. Let the tempter find you there. Let trial find you there. Let death find you there. It is but little of its glories that is perceived by the holiest saint on earth; the full un-

clouded view of them is reserved for the upper sanctuary. But as the saints there are all one in saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing;" so on earth they are all one in seeking this from the Lord—that they may grow in the knowledge of Christ crucified, and in the experience of the sanctifying efficacy of that knowledge.

SERMON X.

CONVERSION OF THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

"Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"—JOHN IV. 29.

THIS was the language of the woman of Samaria at the end of her memorable interview with Jesus. It is a case of the conversion or repentance of a sinner that is here brought before us, one of the cases in which the great end of Christ's coming to our world was reached. Among those who saw and heard Him in the days of His flesh, there were not many such comparatively. But there were some. And this was one of them.

The woman of Samaria might know but little about God and Christ when she spoke these words. She might be very ignorant of many important truths. She might be, she was, but a babe needing milk; beginning, and only beginning, to learn the first principles of godliness. But yet she was a child of God. She had been "dead, and was alive again;" "had been lost, and was found." Jesus acknowledged the change to be a real one, one in which He saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," said He. And the angels, who celebrated His birth when He lay in the manger of Bethlehem, were now looking down and rejoicing over the one repenting sinner. We have here then an example of that change which makes one a Christian.

It is a case of sudden or rapid conversion. Not that the passing from death to life is not always an instantaneous change. But often it is in a gradual way that it shows itself to others and to one's-self, more especially in the case of those who have been trained in the fear of God and have been preserved from open and gross sins; and very often the time of one's conversion may never be known in this world. The conversion of this person was marked and rapid. The woman of Sychar had left the city a poor, ignorant, worldly woman, a stranger to God and to the value of her own soul, all her cares and desires being bounded by this present life: she returned to it a new creature. We have no warrant, therefore, to look with suspicion or doubt on such cases. We ought rather to desire, pray for, and expect them.

It is the case of the conversion of a very unlikely person, one who belonged to a very unlikely people. Jesus had been constrained at this time to turn His back on Judæa, where His own chiefly were, His own who received Him not; and through their unbelief the Samaritans obtained mercy. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" One of the most unlikely of an unlikely people, a very immoral and wicked woman,—not only so, but one who, while this was her character, was ready to enter into an argument with Jesus as to the true place of worship, and to stand up for the religion of her fathers. Who would have said, if there were lost sinners in Sychar to be gathered in, that this woman would be the first of them; that in her, first among them all, Jesus Christ should "shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should thereafter believe on Him to life everlasting?" God's ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts ours, but they are above ours as the heavens are higher than the earth.

Her conversion was Christ's work. It was work in which He manifested the love which brought Him to the world and to the cross. It was effected by the power of His Spirit. Let us strive to think more worthily of this love—the love which woos sinners, which rejoices over the employment of means for their conversion, which says to them when they lie in the open field in their blood, "Live." Let us place our sole confidence in the power of Christ's Spirit, cherishing exalted thoughts of His grace and might. What an illustration have we in the case of this woman of His love and power, as in not a few of the other cases recorded in the gospel narrative, such as those of a Mary Magdalene, a Zaccheus, a dying malefactor. What but free love could have looked upon such?[1] What but Divine power could have converted them?[1]

It is a case which illustrates the manner of conversion, and gives much precious instruction in regard to it. By the manner of conversion, I do not of course mean the way in which the Holy Spirit works. That is hidden from us. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."[2] "As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all."[3] But there are means which He makes use of in effecting this change. He employs His own truth; He deals with us as reasonable and accountable beings possessed of an understanding, a conscience, and a will. There is a knowledge of the truth which is communicated;

[1] In the author's MS. these two clauses are respectively followed by the characteristic parenthetical thoughts, probably not intended to be spoken, —"(could have looked upon *me*?)"—"(could have converted *me*?)"

[2] John iii. 8. [3] Eccles. xi. 5.

there are impressions produced by the truth, impressions of which we are conscious; and there is a change of views and of affections produced by its reception.

The woman of Samaria is presented to us in three different states, phases, or stages of her spiritual history as a sinful, immortal being.

I. First we see her in the state of utter ignorance, indifference, and worldliness. When Jesus, wearied with His journey, and sitting on the well, humbled Himself to ask of her a drink, which He was uncourteously and unkindly refused; and when, overcoming her evil with good, and in the exercise of His holy, heavenly skill, He made use of the water that perishes to illustrate the water that "springs up to everlasting life;" when He made known to her His own grace and fulness as a Saviour, His readiness and His power to make her fully and eternally happy, how ignorant was she of His meaning! "Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?" How petulantly did she ask, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?" She had no care except for the perishing body and the things of this world. Had Jesus spoken to her in an unknown language, or of what was going on in another world, she could not have been more thoroughly ignorant of His meaning than she was when He spoke of Himself as the Gift of God, and of the living water. Salvation, eternal life, were brought near to her; but she knew it not. It does not affect the truth of this remark though we should consider her language—"Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw"—to be expressive of wonder and outward reverence, as some might view it; though it seems equally natural to view it as spoken in the

same spirit with which she said, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?" Now, was it Jesus' fault that His words were unintelligible to her—words relating to her everlasting peace? Ought she not to have understood them, to have understood them so far as that she should count everything but loss that her soul might be saved, and that she might drink of the living water?

Thus then is it with the sinner, learned or unlearned, when the gospel is first presented to him, when Christ in His Word enters into conference with him. He is minding earthly things, and incapable of discerning "the things of the Spirit of God." Thus, alas! is it not only with the sinner when he first hears the gospel, but with very many who hear it long. They have no sight of its preciousness. If they had, the house of prayer would often be felt by them to be the house of God and the gate of heaven. They have no sense of the preciousness of the unspeakable Gift of God, with whom all the things that can be desired are not to be compared. They are still saying, "Who will shew us any good?" They have never had a thirst awakened in their souls for the living water. Yes, and while they may hold by a sound creed and have certain notions of Christ and of the blessings of salvation, were they to examine themselves narrowly they would find that they are as truly ignorant of Christ as was the woman of Samaria. Is it thus with you? Then God's voice to you is, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

II. Next, we see her in the condition of one awakened to spiritual earnestness, to a knowledge of sin, and to a sense of sinfulness before God. One main thing that hindered her from understanding Christ's words and from listening to them with suitable deep soul-interest, was her ignorance of her own state as a sinner. It was necessary then

that this should be removed. More than this was needed, but this in the first place. And how was this to be done? The sinfulness of her life and heart needed to be exhibited to her, as discovered by the light of the law or (which amounts to the same thing) of the character of the heart-searching, holy, and just God. Jesus therefore proceeded to instruct her in the knowledge of sin, in the only way in which that can be attained by us—the knowledge of it as a something which belongs to us, which adheres to us, which possesses us, which is ours—therefore the experimental knowledge of it. Manifesting Himself as the omniscient One, He spoke in a way calculated to conduct her from the knowledge of the sinfulness of her life to the sinfulness of her heart, and thus to her lost state before God. But He not only spoke what was fitted to awaken and convince her of sin—how many solemn and pungent words did Jesus often speak which left His hearers insensible and impenitent still!—in this case He applied His own discourse as He uttered it; He opened her heart to attend; He shot His arrows home. If it be asked, why in this case rather than in others? we can only answer that His love would have it so:—"Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." It was not in consequence of any natural ingenuousness which belonged to this woman amidst all her ungodliness, or of any disposition to receive the truth when presented to her, that she received and acknowledged Jesus as Messiah; but it was because this was the time of Christ's power and Christ's love, when He was to draw to Himself this poor sinner, and when, therefore, in order that she might appreciate the loving-kindness with which she was drawn, He was to make her feel what it was to be a sinner.

This is the attitude in which Jesus is here presented to us, dealing with this woman in the way that was necessary

in order to her being shut up to Him, the Saviour of the world, as the Saviour of her soul; not only presenting the truth outwardly in the best adapted way (this He ever did, this He could never fail to do), but by His grace secretly and efficaciously influencing her mind and heart, so that the truth should do its work on her conscience and affections. In particular, we see Him calling on her conscience, her long stifled conscience, to awake, and with the light furnished it by the remembrance of sin and by the begun realizing view of the character of God, to accuse her, to summon her to God's bar, and to condemn her there. And therefore the Divine fisher of souls did not let go His hold of her after He had apprehended her by His word. Had He left her to herself, she would have escaped out of the net, and the only effect of her interview with Him would have been that she would be the more miserable in life and the more miserable in eternity. She did what she could to escape. It might be well enough to hear of the living water; there was nothing in that directly calculated to excite unpleasant feelings; but it was not pleasant to be reminded of her shame and her sins, and to feel the begun stirrings of an awakened conscience. She made a strenuous effort to change the conversation that she might get rid of the painful remembrances. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship;" as much as to say, "Come, let us change the conversation; here is a more suitable subject to speak about, the true place of worship." And she was quite ready to argue the matter with the Redeemer. Oh! how many thus put an end to merciful awakenings and stirrings of conscience! How many say with Felix, "Go thy way for this time." How few are made willing to welcome discoveries of sin, and are afraid of being left in ignorance of the worst of

their case! This poor woman did what she could to sacrifice her soul to the world. But Christ stood between her and destruction, to save her from her own deceitful wicked heart. And He did this in a way worthy of Himself.

The subject introduced by the woman was not in itself unimportant. The truth was on the side of the Jews. Jesus declared this, "Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews." But there was something more important for the woman to know than the place of worship which had been divinely appointed,—even the character and the glory of the Object of worship, and the kind of worship which befitted His nature and in which He could have pleasure. "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." He made use of the subject she had introduced for the purpose of deepening impressions on her mind of her sinfulness and her misery. We cannot doubt that when Jesus spoke these words, there came in upon her mind for the first time such a sense of the glory of the infinite God, and of the worship and fear and love which are His due, as carried with it not only a conviction that she had committed many sins against Him, but that she had never cherished one right thought of Him or one right disposition towards Him; that she had been living alienated from Him and in rebellion against Him, and that, unless deliverance should come to her in some unknown way, she would be miserable for ever. Something like this state of mind we must believe to have been produced by Jesus' words coming to her with power. And this is what we mean by the second stage in her spiritual history. She had begun this conference self-righteous and whole-hearted, notwithstanding her sinful life. She now felt herself a sinner.

Is this stage of soul-experience one with which we have been made familiar? Have we gone over it?—whether the

time have been longer or shorter, whether it have been more or less sensibly distressing and alarming to us. Have we been thus so far prepared for understanding the gospel, by feeling our need of its glad tidings? From the sins of our life have we been led to the knowledge of the evil of our heart, of our need of a Mediator and a Saviour? If not, we are still strangers to the true God and to His Christ. If we have, we can also understand from our own experience the *third* stage in the spiritual history of the woman of Samaria, when Jesus made Himself known to her as Messiah with drawing power. Surely never did Christ lead a sinner to feel his need of a Saviour without manifesting Himself to him in His grace, His all-suitableness, and His all-sufficiency.

III. What may have been the workings of the woman's mind, when she said, "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ," I presume not to say; whether at the very moment the thought was not suggested to her, that it was Messiah Himself who was talking to her. Be this as it may, she needed a Saviour—One of infinite grace, for she was vile—of infinite power, for she was lost—One who could mediate for her, reconcile her to the Father, and save her from her sins. She needed an immediate revelation of Him to her soul; and therefore Jesus, in adorable condescension, and with peculiar freedom in regard to the way of manifestation, said, "I, that speak unto thee, am he." And doubtless, when the gracious words proceeded from His lips, the power of His Spirit was put forth in enlightening the eyes of her understanding and in renewing her will in such a manner and with such sure efficacy as that, however dimly, she recognised the glory of the Divine Speaker, saw in Him the Redeemer, the Teacher, to whom she could commit her soul's salvation, and felt her heart go forth to Him in worship and in love to be His for eternity.

There is such a precious time as this in the life of every saved sinner; the time when he is blessed with so much of the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ revealed in the gospel, in His grace as the Saviour of sinners, in His suitableness to his guilt and darkness and pollution as a sinner, in His all-sufficiency and in His freeness, as encourages and constrains him to rest upon Him for salvation, to give Him his heart, and to yield himself up to Him to follow Him in a present world. And this is conversion. Has there been such a time, such an epoch as this, in our past history? We may not be able to tell of some particular day or hour when we were taken from the "fearful pit and from the miry clay," when, after being brought low, we were helped, and so helped as that we could say, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee;" but, was the discovery of a Saviour our one engrossing desire and pursuit? did we find in Him enough to allay our fears of wrath, enough to turn our love of sin to hatred and sorrow on account of it, enough to draw our hearts away from the world and the creature, enough to make Him our rest and our portion? did we find in Him a preciousness that cannot be told?

The foregoing or similar questions, may be better answered by some when we proceed to consider the *language* of the woman of Samaria as that of the convert in the moment of conversion, and as bringing before us some of the marks or evidences of the change. It will not be supposed that we mean that all true converts may be expected to give utterance to their feelings, or expression to their hopes and desires, in the manner in which she gave expression to hers. Her peculiar circumstances are to be taken into account; the peculiar way in which she was dealt with, the outwardly calm yet all-efficacious manner in

which her whole inner man was revolutionized; in particular, the glorious abruptness with which Jesus made Himself known to her and entered her heart conquering and to conquer, and her wondrous blessed consciousness of being a new creature and of having found Messiah. Surely it was eminently true of her, that when the Lord turned her captivity, she was as those that dream. Ordinarily we desire to see in young converts, along with peace in believing, the symptoms of self-jealousy or the fear of self-deception operating as a check on the unguarded or unbecoming expression of hope in regard to their condition. And, indeed, ordinarily in the present state of things in the Church of Christ, the deeper the inward work, the more guarded may be the expression of hope on the part of its subject. When a shower of grace descends on a congregation or on a portion of the Church, it is otherwise. Then, indeed, as on the day of Pentecost, there is quicker, more decided, and more glorious work done. As the sense of sin is the deeper, the peace in Jesus is the greater; and, out of the abundance of warm, fervid affections, it is not only more natural to speak of the preciousness found in Christ, but one is constrained to tell to those who fear God what hath been done for his soul. But, viewing the language of the woman as the faithful expression of what she felt, and as expressing the feelings and desires of her new nature, I would notice the following things in regard to it, as applicable to all true converts.

1. She had experience of Christ's omniscience. She said that He had "told her *all* things that ever she did." This was not literally true; Jesus had not said very much to her; the interview had not been a long one. And yet there was no exaggeration in the language. It was apt, and fit to express what ordinary language could not. In this short interview her whole life had been told her.

Jesus made known to her His omniscience, as extending to the bottom of her heart and to all her thoughts and ways. He had laid hold of her conscience by His word; and conscience had done its office and wakened up memory, and secret sins and forgotten sins were brought to her view, and the light of truth was cast on her life and heart, and all that she had ever done was seen to be sin.

Thus does Christ still when He comes to the sinner in His converting power. He shows Him all that he did; the sins of his childhood, the sins of his youth in all their aggravations, his stupidity, his infatuation, his ingratitude, his rebellion, his selfishness, his mischievousness; till his high thoughts are laid low; till he is filled with shame, and self-condemnation, and self-revenge, with nothing in himself or of his own to take refuge in or to draw hope from, and would sink into despair unless Jesus showed him what He has done and suffered for the salvation of sinners, and what thoughts of peace towards them were in His heart from everlasting. Then, in beginning to hope in a new way, he begins to sorrow in a new way. Thus does Jesus prepare His way in the sinner's heart, and thus does He teach the soul obtaining mercy to mingle godly sorrow with its joy, and to say with Ephraim, "Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth."[1]

2. The woman said, "Is not *this* the Christ?—He who hath told me all things that ever I did." Jesus had plainly said, "I am he;" she had His own testimony for it; and she was not likely to forget the words, nor to forget how she felt when faith, looking through the veil of His blessed humanity, saw the King of Glory in His beauty. But it would appear that what most vividly impressed her

[1] Jer. xxxi. 19.

mind and brought with it the conviction that He was the very Christ, was the power and efficacy of His words: as though she had said, "Whose words could have such power in searching my inmost soul; in making known the thoughts and intents of my heart; in making known to me my real character, the wretched life I have been living, the polluted heart I have been carrying about with me; in bringing me to realize the character of the infinite God with whom I have to do, and the solemnity of the eternity that is before me; and in enabling me, even out of the depths of a sense of misery, of vileness, and of helplessness, to look to Himself with hope of being cleansed, and sanctified, and saved?—whose, but the Christ's?" In the power, then, of Christ's words, she had the evidence of His Messiahship.

So it is experience of the power of the word of Christ—the word, namely, of His glorious law and more glorious gospel—in awakening from the deep sleep of sin, in discovering the delusions of the heart and the vanity of the world, in quickening to flee from the wrath to come, in breaking the hard heart, in giving peace and rest in the blood and righteousness and grace and yoke of Christ,—it is this experience of the suitableness of the gospel to all the necessities of his immortal and sinful spirit that will give the humblest and the poorest Christian an assurance of the divinity of the gospel that no human learning or teaching can ever produce. And, as it is by putting it to the *trial*, or by the simple *proving* of it, that this experience is attained to, therefore we say, "Come and see." And as it is the blessedness of the Christian that he is shut up to the seeking of nothing less than this inward experience of the efficacy of the word from day to day, in order that the necessities of his soul may be met and supplied—so one of the happy fruits that attends such experience, is

the assurance—"Is not this the gospel of God, that is the power of God to my salvation?"

3. The woman said, "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did." She left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and invited the men of it to come and see Jesus. Some may wonder that she should leave Christ's presence, without being bidden by Him to do so, at the very time that she must have been experiencing its heavenly attractiveness. And some may see nothing more in her words and conduct than the expression of surprise and astonishment, or the desire to have the sympathy of others. But surely we must see something far more precious than this—the direct fruit of Christ's grace, the immediate attendant of a sense of His preciousness—a new kind of love, love to the souls of others, concern for their salvation, the desire to lead them to Jesus. No sooner did she find a Saviour than she would labour that others might find Him too. With a full heart she cried out, "Come, see this wondrous Man, who has shown such overflowing mercy to such a sinner as me, and who can show the same mercy to you." Let the world say what it will, true, unselfish love is to be found only in the Church of Christ and as the fruit of His grace. And the more that Christ's grace is experienced by His people, the greater will be their love to the souls of others, and the greater their readiness to lay themselves out for their salvation. And I must notice how, in the success which attended her efforts—in the many others in Sychar who were led to Christ—we see what important results may follow the striking conversion of one sinner.

Christian! the Samaritan woman is an example to you. If Christ has shown mercy to you, and manifested Himself to your soul, He has not done this for your sake only, but that you may commend His salvation and His ways to

others. Though you may not be able to speak much about Christ, you may commend Him by a few words fitly spoken to poor fellow-sinners; and you can commend Him by a conversation becoming His gospel, a humble, watchful, loving, holy conversation; you can invite them to prove Christ, and to come and meet with Him where He has promised to meet with His people to bless them. And be assured that you will find a heart and strength for this work, just as you live under the experience of the power of Christ's word.

The woman of Samaria is an example to us ministers. This is our great work—to invite our fellow-sinners to Jesus. How blessed, notwithstanding its difficulties and its responsibilities, is work in which we are *then* rightly engaged, when, enjoying fellowship with the Saviour and experiencing the efficacy of His gospel, we can say, "That which we have seen and heard, *that* declare we unto you." Oh! it is our shame that when we have such a glorious theme to discourse upon, our hearts are not ever burning within us, and that we can say so little to prevail upon our fellow-sinners to come and see Christ. But this we would say this day;—to the saint, Come and meet with Jesus, that He may give you a fresh drink of that water which "shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life;" and to the sinner, Oh, come to Jesus in His word, that He may tell you what you are, what you have been doing, where you are going, what you need, how you can be saved, pardoned, justified, and blessed for ever!

SERMON XI.

MANASSEH.

"Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign," etc.—2 CHRON. XXXIII. 1-20; 2 KINGS XXI. 1-18.

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope."—ROM. XV. 4.

MUCH solemn and important instruction is to be learned from the life of Manasseh, and God's dealings with him.

He was the son of a man who was distinguished for personal piety, and who was eminently honoured of God;[1] one who must have been exemplary as a father and as the head of a household.[2] And it is a high privilege to have such a father, involving in it deep responsibility. But his father was removed when he was but twelve years of age. This, in any circumstances, would have been a terrible blow, but more especially when, at so early an age, he was to occupy the arduous and dangerous station of king of Judah. What particular influences were at work to ensnare and corrupt him, we are not informed. But if Hezekiah had been pre-eminent for piety, the son proved pre-eminent for wickedness. "He did evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel," and the evil is specified with fearful minuteness.[3] He

[1] 2 Kings xviii. 3-6. [2] Ps. ci. 2; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. [3] Ver. 2-10.

began by insulting his father's memory and his father's God, by "building again the high places which Hezekiah had broken down." And, as though this had been a small matter, he proceeded to establish idolatry, rearing up altars to Baalim, and worshipping all the host of heaven; experiencing the vanity of his idols, but endeavouring to make up by their number for their vanity. He profaned the name and the house of God, and set God at defiance, building altars in the house of the Lord and in the two courts of the house of the Lord for all the host of heaven, and setting a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God. He was guilty of the most revolting cruelty as a father, causing his children to pass through the fire in honour of the idol Moloch. He made a covenant with hell, abandoning himself to the most degrading superstition. He made Judah and Israel to sin, and he shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other. And all this was aggravated by his being the son of such a father, and by his being king of Judah where God was known; by past judgments of God against the wickedness of rulers and people; by his long continuance in sin; and by the solemn warnings which he received and despised,—for "the Lord spake to Manasseh and to his people, but they would not hearken." This whole description presents the character of an outrageous hardened sinner, past fear, feeling or shame. And who would expect anything else than that such a heaven-defying sinner, after filling up the measure of his iniquity, would be driven away in his wickedness?

But "the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God

of his fathers, and prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God." He was afflicted, and his affliction was sanctified. The severest affliction has indeed no power in itself to bring the sinner to his right mind. No doubt there are some things which a sinner *must* see and feel in the time of sore affliction; for example, the vanity of the world, the misery of being without true hope in God, the bitterness of sin; but all this may be seen and felt, and yet the heart be the more hardened and closed up against God. The fetters and the dungeon, the change from outward greatness and power to misery, disgrace, and ruin, might have produced in Manasseh the repentance of a Cain or a Judas; but without grace this would have been all. However, in the Lord's hand, and in connection with His word, affliction proves efficacious for breaking the stubborn heart and humbling the stoutest sinner. And the Lord often makes precious use of it, and begins a precious work with such painful dealing.

How long he may have remained stupified and sullen under the hand of God, a prey to the workings of tumultuous passions, endeavouring as he could to endure what he could not resist, or brought down and terrified without being humbled; what a hell may have been felt in his breast when he had but his own heart to commune with and a God whom he still strove to forget; or what temptations to self-destruction he may have been visited with in this situation, we know not. But it pleased the Lord in His sovereign mercy to visit him, and, instead of leaving him under the dominion of a reprobate mind, to let in so much light on his dark understanding as made the existence, the presence and the nearness of the one living and true God

real to him. It was then a truth that God *is;* the God of the Bible, the Creator, the great and terrible God who had spoken from Mount Sinai—the God of his fathers. He felt His presence; with Him he had to do; against Him he had been sinning and contending for a lifetime. Conscience, now awakened from its long sleep: and what a charge had it to bring against him! Sin began to be seen in its true colours. Memory wakened up. His past life was before his view. The instructions received in childhood were remembered by him. The image of his godly father stood before him, and the images of the souls he had slain. What had he been doing on God's earth till now? Oh! how infatuated had he been! How truly had he approved himself a child of the devil!

Oh, had he but life to live over again, with its precious years to be redeemed for God, its blessed opportunities for glorifying God! But that cannot be. What would he now give to efface the black catalogue of his sins? But there they were in God's book, and in the book of conscience too, in all their enormity and inexcusableness and aggravations, charged with the wrath of the Almighty. Where shall he look for comfort? The arrows of the Almighty are already within him; he is in the hands of an angry God, a God who has often reproved him, while *he* has hardened his neck.

Must he then become a vessel of wrath? Must he spend a never-ending existence in cursing the day of his birth? If, out of the dungeon, he sink into the abyss of hell, he feels that he must carry with him the conviction that he will suffer *justly.* How often has God called and he refused? how often has God stretched out His hand and he has not regarded? May He not then now "laugh at his calamity and mock at his fear?" But oh! if what he apprehends of the wrath of the Almighty and the agonies of a guilty conscience be so insupportable, what will the

full experience of that wrath be,—to lie down in everlasting burnings? See the change which the letting in of the truth on the mind (the truth about God and sin) has wrought in the proud, hardened, remorseless man. See how his knees smite together, and how dismay may be read in his countenance, while he expects almost momentarily the execution of the sentence in force against him.

Is there then *no hope?* Is he falling into black despair? and is this the terrible sight that our eyes witness, that we may take warning? Is Satan right when he says, "Faithfully hast thou served me during a lifetime; now thou art mine for ever. Never did I lose at the eleventh hour one who had served me as thou hast done!"

Adored be the grace that kept Manasseh from despair! The Friend of Sinners was in that dungeon, in the exercise of the love which, in the fulness of the time, was to be poured out on the accursed tree. It was written in His Word, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin."[1] Surely Hezekiah would have sought to imprint these words on the heart of his child: they may have come to his mind now. And it was also written there, "If from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul."[2] There was then nothing too hard or too rich for such a God. How wondrous, beyond conception, the patience that had been exercised towards him year after year! If there were such riches in His forbearance, what untold and unsearchable riches must there be in His saving mercy! Might it not then be that even sins like his might be pardoned, a polluted wretch like him be cleansed, and a rebel such as he had ever been be

[1] Exod. xxxiv. 6. [2] Deut. iv. 29.

reconciled? Who could tell what such a God could do? And was there not a prayer suited for such a case as his? "For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; FOR IT IS GREAT."[1]

His pent-up feelings give themselves expression in a new way. Rivers of waters run down his eyes, while he prostrates himself before God. "Behold, he prayeth!" Solemn, blessed sight!—the chief sinner making confession; free confession, no longer wrung from him; confession which *must* be made, though the Lord should cast him from His sight; full confession, without any reserve or attempt at self-justification; particular confession—his sins crowding upon him or kept before him as past reckoning, in all their aggravations as against light and privileges and obligations and dealings and warnings, as against God—and such a God. Condemning himself as a beast, a devil—as deserving of the lowest hell; humbling himself before God, the Holy One, in whose sight the heavens are not clean; humbling himself "greatly" before the God of his fathers; crying with groanings that cannot be uttered; yet making supplication for mercy and for a heart to turn to the Lord; and making supplication too, that, if it were consistent with the Divine glory, not only might his sins be pardoned and his nature renewed, but that he might be restored to the place and country where he had so long dishonoured God and been a soul-murderer, that he might bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and weep in sackcloth before his people, and endeavour to awaken them to a sense of the wickedness of the courses to which he had seduced them.

He prayeth: but oh! how little has he confessed! He must pray again. How faint, comparatively, is his sense of sin, how wretchedly inadequate his humiliation! He

[1] Ps. xxv. 11.

must pray again. How unspeakably precious the blessings which he seeks! How can he rest one hour without reconciliation to God? And dare he after all hope that God will hear his cry; that he shall ever know Him as the God of peace on earth, or stand in His holy place above?[1] Surely not for his prayers' sake dare he cherish any hope. Yet mercy he will seek, and at His footstool will he now be found.

Behold, then, he prayeth! Amidst temptations and discouragements, he still prayeth; with a deepening sense of sin, of his own sinfulness and desert of wrath, and of the pollution of his prayers, he still prayeth. While there is no present response, while his burden increases and while the hope that had entered his breast is almost ready to expire —for it is hard to pray while there is no present answer— he still waits for God.

And God's time came, whether after days or weeks or months, for making Himself known as the Hearer of his cry. The Lord "was entreated of him." For He delighteth in mercy; there is forgiveness with Him for "all manner of sin and blasphemy"—for all sin confessed in Christ's name; and He is the hearer of prayer, He cannot deny Himself. He delivered him from his fears, spoke peace to his soul, and took him out of the fearful pit. He said, "Deliver from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom." Not only so, but He brought him again to Jerusalem, to his kingdom. This was indeed special mercy—to give him some little time on earth for manifesting the depth of his repentance, and for glorifying God, by making confession and by seeking to turn others from the error of their ways.

"Then Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God." When in affliction, He had known him in His power and

[1] Ps. xxiv. 3, 4.

holiness and jealousy; He now knew him in His grace, in which His glory specially appears. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy."[1] And he brought forth fruits meet for repentance, walking humbly with his God, establishing His true worship, and exercising his authority for the suppression of all idolatry. And these efforts were accepted, and, in some measure, acknowledged by God.

Yet we read, after all the reformation wrought by Josiah, "Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal. And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem, which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there."[2] Thus Manasseh had sealed the temporal ruin of the land, while *he* was plucked as a brand from the burning. Thus *may* a hardened sinner obtain mercy, and souls whom he has tempted and led in the way to destruction be left to perish. An awful truth, yet a truth; and unless this were the case, "who could be saved?" for who, by his sins of commission or omission, has not been in God's sight a murderer of the souls of others? But what an overwhelmingly affecting consideration to the child of God, that while he has obtained mercy, others, perhaps far less guilty than he, whom he may have been instrumental in hardening, have been left.

We do not know how many years he lived after his return from Babylon. We cannot doubt that he loved much, and, even while rejoicing in the grace that could

[1] Micah vii. 18. [2] 2 Kings xxiii. 26.

gloriously pardon and transform such a sinner, sorrowed much. Nor would he feel it necessary to conceal his sadness; for his case was an extraordinary one;—all the land ought to know what reason he had for being of a sad countenance; and it is probable that it was by his own desire that he was buried, not in the sepulchres of the kings, but in his own garden.

The lessons to be learned from this subject are such as these:—

1. The wickedness of the heart—not of Manasseh's heart only, but of ours:—no outward means, or privileges, or providences, will of themselves avail to change it. We learn, too, how "one sinner destroyeth much good;"—a lesson specially applicable indeed to one in a station of much influence, but also generally applicable. It is easy to do evil in this evil world: but it is hard to do good; it is a continual working against the stream.

2. Be anxious to improve the time of affliction. Has it surprised you *in your sins?* Oh! entreat the Lord to have mercy upon you, lest you should be taken away with a stroke, or lest, while outwardly delivered, you be left more hardened than before. On the other hand, is it as a *child* you are corrected? Receive the evil of affliction as from a loving Father, who chastens you for your profit.

3. Let us learn the superabounding character of the grace of God; its power to take away the stoniest heart, its riches to make the guiltiest sinner white as snow. Who would not have said, "What an awful reckoning with his Judge awaits this man!" yet the Lord had mercy on him. The last was made first. Beware, then, of self-righteousness. God saved Manasseh for his name's sake; and if He saves you, it will be for no other reason. Have you been preserved from open sin? give God the glory: but take care lest you stand on your good character in the

presence of your Judge, and it fare with you as with the Pharisee in our Saviour's parable.[1] But turn not His grace into lasciviousness. Manasseh's case, like that of the dying thief, is an altogether singular one. How few hardened sinners are converted, how few who lose the time of youth are converted! "To-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts." And let us not despair of the salvation of very unlikely characters. Is there one over whom you have been grieving, whose case you have been trying to keep on your spirit at a throne of grace, but of whom you are ready to lose hope altogether? Think of Manasseh. Think of the grace in which there are exceeding riches. Faint not in prayer. "God's thoughts are not our thoughts." There are last which shall be first.

4. Let us improve this subject, as a remedy against despairing thoughts in regard to our own salvation.

There may be many of my hearers who have no felt need of such an exhortation, because they have light views of sin, of God, and of salvation. The Lord look down in mercy upon them, and awaken them to a sense of the straitness of the gate ere they be left without for ever. There may be others who have a constant feeling of uneasiness and insecurity arising from an unpurged conscience, while at the same time they cleave to sin and feel as though it were hopeless to expect to be delivered from it. When conscience at any time speaks louder than at other times, the tempter whispers, "There is no hope;" and, loving their idols, they continue to follow them. Oh! this is an awfully dangerous condition. If there is any one of my hearers who realizes it as his own, I would warn him against the snare of the devil. There is no hope if he continue to drown the voice of conscience, and to refuse to know the worst of his case; but there *is* hope in the blood

[1] Luke xviii. 14.

and grace of Christ; and if he perish, it will not be because Christ's blood could not cleanse him, and because Christ's grace could not humble and sanctify him, but because he would not prove Christ, and would choose death. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

But the child of God, the Christian, needs this exhortation too. He may now have "peace;" he may come yet to be in deep waters. "When God giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him?"[1]

There was an eminent saint, an eminent minister of Christ now in glory, who in his dying sickness was sorely exercised in regard to the state of his soul. The enemy thrust sore, and he was brought very low. His sins possessed him, God's face was hid from him, and hope had well-nigh expired. While in this anguish of spirit, one night he dreamed a dream. He was not one of those who put any trust in impressions or in dreams apart from the law and the testimony. But God can still make use of this means for instruction and for admonition. He dreamed that he saw heaven opened, and a company approach and go in, and the door was shut. In this company he beheld Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and many of the Old Testament saints, and some whom he himself had known; but he could not get in along with them. There was a pause, and again the door was opened, and again a company approached, and in this company he knew many; but he could not get in along with them; and he began to tremble exceedingly. A third time the door was opened, and another company approached, and they went in one

[1] Job xxxiv. 29.

after another; and terror began to seize upon him, and his knees smote one against another; when all at once, looking round, he saw Manasseh—Manasseh who had made Jerusalem stream with blood: "and," said the dying saint, "I crept in at Manasseh's back." Thus he found peace, and thus he died, having nothing to trust to but this—but it was enough—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," *even the chief.*

SERMON XII.

HEAVEN'S JOY OVER THE PENITENT.

"Likewise, I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."—LUKE xv. 10.

THE publicans and sinners, attracted by the preaching of Jesus, and encouraged by His condescension and meekness, crowded to hear Him, and manifested extraordinary eagerness to be instructed by Him. But the scribes and Pharisees murmured, saying, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." By these words they insinuated, that if Jesus had come from God, He would have repelled such characters, and have said, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me: for I am holier than thou." Were it that they shunned the society of the publicans out of honest fear of suffering harm, and therefore left it to those who could deal with them to call them to repentance, it would have been well. But they were actuated by a proud, selfish spirit. They would neither use means for the conversion of their fellow-sinners, nor encourage the Saviour in His work. In considering how far the conduct of Jesus is an example to us, we must bear in mind that He was incapable of being defiled. It is not the Christian's duty to associate with open sinners: "a companion of fools shall be destroyed." But it is his duty to care for their souls;

and if he is not called directly to labour for their conversion, he ought to pray for and encourage those who do so.

Now the parables contained in this chapter are our Lord's answer to the murmurs of the Pharisees. He answers them on their own grounds. He was engaged in His proper work, as having come to call sinners to repentance. If the Pharisees needed no repentance, why quarrel with Him for seeking the conversion of those who both needed it and professed their need of it? All heaven rejoiced in His work, and in its success. If, instead of rejoicing, *they* murmured and reviled, they thus gave evidence that they had no sympathy with heaven, that they were hypocrites, and, therefore, that none needed repentance more than they. The Redeemer, in exposing their hypocrisy, brings out the greatness and the preciousness of conversion.

"And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, That likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

"Either what woman, having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the

piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

A curious and interesting question is suggested as to the measure of knowledge possessed by the angels and the redeemed of what is going on in our earth. We know that the angels who celebrated the birth of Christ, who ministered to Him in His temptation, who strengthened Him in His agony, who announced His resurrection, and waited on Him in His ascension to glory,—we know that they are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation." And we have every reason to think, that next to their direct attendance before the Throne, this is their most honourable and delightful employment. We know, further, that the souls of departed saints do not sleep till the resurrection; and that, amidst the glories of the beatific vision, they are not uninterested in the cases of their brethren who are engaged in the conflict which they once fought in this vale of tears, and whose fellowship they long for. They are "a cloud of witnesses," surrounding those who are engaged in running the Christian race. And as they wait in joyful hope for the adoption, even the redemption of the body, so they long for the completion of the mystical body of Christ, when "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads:" when "they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." It cannot be, then, that they are left in ignorance of the state of God's cause on earth. It is made abundantly plain to us, from other parts of the Word, that they are made acquainted with the providences, joyful or terrible, which God makes to work together for its ultimate triumph. And this passage warrants us to affirm at least this much, that the repentance of one

sinner is an event of such magnitude as to occasion joy to all heaven.

Heaven! How ignorant are we of heaven! How ignorant, even those who long most for its rest and its blessedness. "Here we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face." But this much we know, that it is there that the glory of God is especially manifested, that Jehovah-Jesus is seen in our nature as the Lamb in the midst of the Throne; that it is there that holiness and holy love dwell—supreme and perfect love to God, and perfect love to one another; and that it is there that God is worshipped, served, and enjoyed without weariness, interruption, and sin. And this much also we know, that for no little, unworthy, or trivial reasons will there be joy in heaven. Now, there is joy there over "one sinner that repenteth."

Let us look reverently into this, and inquire why. It might be sufficient answer to say, that it is by the bringing of sinners to repentance that the work of redemption, God's great work, is advanced. Repentance was the subject of the preaching of God's servants in Old Testament times, of Christ's forerunner, of Christ Himself who "came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance," and of the Apostles who testified "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ;" and it must be the subject of our preaching still, "that men must repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Now, as God designed in the work of redemption not only the salvation of lost sinners of our race, but also to show to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places" His manifold wisdom and exceeding rich grace, and as it is when the work of Christ takes effect in the conversion of sinners unto God that this is fully shown, we may see why there is joy among them over one sinner that repenteth.

For,—1. Repentance is attended with salvation. It is "unto life;" it is the finding of the lost, the restoring to life of the dead. If the impenitent shall assuredly perish, the penitent shall surely be saved; not, indeed, because of any virtue or merit in repentance to procure pardon or to qualify for it—the repentance which looks for pardon in this way is false and spurious repentance—but because faith (through which we obtain the pardon of sin) and repentance are inseparably joined together; and because repentance is salvation begun, in the truest sense of salvation,—the soul's return to God, the beginning of sanctification.[1]

There is joy, then, in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, because repentance and salvation are connected. THE LORD swears by Himself that He hath "no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." He is gracious; He is love. It is not because He is not infinitely gracious that there is a hell, but because He is infinitely just too. It is because He is infinitely gracious that mercy is exercised in our apostate world. Each repenting sinner has been loved by Him with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness does He awaken, and wound, and humble, and draw him; and therefore does He rejoice over him with singing. His holy

[1] Only let us remember that the repentance which is the beginning of sanctification is a repentance which also attends its progress, and which continues in exercise till the Christian is delivered from sin, the cause of his sorrow. For there is reason to fear that there are many who rest satisfied with a kind of repentance which accompanied their first seeking after Christ, but which then ceased to be exercised; though, on the other hand, there are true penitents, who, mourning over the shallowness of their repentance, are tempted needlessly to give way to despondency. Let these abhor themselves, indeed, because they sorrow so little over that which God hates, and which cost Christ so much; but if they desire and long for a heart broken for sin and from sin, then let them look to Him who is exalted to give repentance, and who will keep His own as mourners for sin till with His own hands He wipe away every tear from their eyes for ever.

creatures bear His image; they, too, are love: therefore they rejoice over the deliverance of the sinner from endless woe, and over his becoming an heir of the like fulness of joy which they themselves experience. They rejoice over the fresh exercise and triumph of sovereign redeeming love. They have never indeed felt the torments of hell, but they have a vivid impression of their dreadfulness such as none on earth can have; and they know in their own experience what the blessedness of heaven is; therefore they rejoice over the deliverance of the repenting sinner from everlasting burnings, and over his being made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

2. Repentance, in a peculiar way, gives glory to God as the righteous Lawgiver, and on this ground also there is "joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." God hath made all things for Himself—the heavens and the earth, the irrational and the rational creation—for the showing forth of His praise. We are called, therefore, to do all to the glory of God. This is the Christian's aim, though he ever comes short of it. It is never missed in heaven. And there they estimate the importance of everything by the measure in which it displays the glory of God. It is evident that the only way in which rational creatures can glorify God is by exercising suitable dispositions towards Him, such as reverence, love, and trust, and in manifesting these dispositions in every right and appointed way—acknowledging Him and giving Him glory. Thus do holy beings glorify God. And when God's rational creatures fail to do this, and are abandoned of God for ever, then He shows His wrath in their destruction, and thus takes glory to His great name. Now, what is there peculiar in the way in which the repenting sinner glorifies God? He is but an infant in grace; there are but the seeds of gracious dispositions in his heart; it is but the dawn in

his soul. Can he glorify God as pure spirits do? We dare not, and do not, affirm this. Yet is there something peculiar in his condition and feelings which may well excite the wonder of holy beings, as they are an object of interest to Jehovah Himself. "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord."[1]

Who *is* the repenting sinner? He is one who, but yesterday, had his heart filled with worldliness, selfishness, pride, unbelief, and enmity against God, and who stood out in rebellion against Him—and all this, perhaps, under the garb of discipleship: but now his sins possess him; he has no cloak for them; his whole past life has been *sin;* his lust, and atheism, and profanity, and unthankfulness, and want of love to Christ, and countless other sins, have taken hold of him, so that he cannot lift up his head. He has broken a law which is holy, and just, and good. It is against God he has sinned—the Creator, the Preserver, the Lawgiver, the long-suffering God, the Redeemer. And withal, his heart is evil, it is desperately wicked. See how the Word, the formerly despised Bible, makes his knees smite together! You may see this: but no human eye can see how its light penetrates to the darkest recesses of the heart; how its fire consumes his self-righteousness; how its sword kills false hope. He condemns himself; he

[1] Jer. xxxi. 18-20.

abhors himself; he ascribes righteousness to God, though He should cast him from His sight for ever. For this belongs to true repentance:—not merely remorse, or a sense of the evil of sin as bringing misery in its train (such was Judas's repentance); not merely sorrow for sin because we hope that God has pardoned, or will pardon, our sins (such sorrow may consist with love to sin and opposition to the sovereignty of God); but a recognition of the glory of the attribute of justice in God, as manifested in the requirements and the sanctions of His law, and an acquiescence in the equity of these sanctions, although they should be put in force against the soul. I do not say a willingness to be damned—God forbid that I should say so!—but such an ascribing as this, of righteousness to the Lawgiver.

Now, is there not something peculiar in such a state of mind as this? What a change, what a revolution is here! How is the power of Divine grace to be seen and admired in it! Is there not something peculiar in the testimony which the repenting sinner gives to the holiness and righteousness of the Lawgiver?—that he should unite an experience of the dreadful nature of sin to which the perfectly holy are strangers, with an acquiescence in the equity of the law to which the lost are strangers: that he should unite a sense of the fearfulness of having offended God with reverence for Him as the God to whom vengeance belongeth, yea with such reverence as could not be exercised unless He were a God who hated and must punish sin: that he should unite a sense of infinite unworthiness, of desert of condemnation at the hands of God, with cleaving to the Lord and with looking to Him for mercy:—(for assuredly I do not say that true heart-acquiescence in the justice of God will be exercised apart from a discovery, however faint, of the truth that "there is forgiveness with Him.")

3. Repentance glorifies the mercy of God. It is one of

the fruits of the cross of Christ, and therefore is there "joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." As we cannot conceive of God's calling the sinner to repentance without making known His pardoning mercy, so neither can we conceive of a sinner's exercising true repentance without some apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ. It is God's glory, in a peculiar manner, that He is "merciful and gracious;" that He exercises mercy on the earth through the blood of His Son. It is into this that the angels and the redeemed desire to look, while they sing "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." It is one of the fruits of that precious death, that the "wicked" is called "to forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts;" and it is one of its fruits, when seen in its glory and felt in its power, that a sinner exercises true repentance.

The law makes known sin, and in the hands of the Holy Spirit convinces of sin, awakening the conscience, breaking the stoutness and bringing down the pride of the heart, and producing in the sinner self-condemnation and despair of doing anything for his own recovery; but it can never awaken true sorrow for sin, nor hatred to it; and, separated from the gospel, it would lead to utter despair. And, necessary though its teaching be, the solemn lessons which it teaches are learned still more impressively when the soul is conducted from Mount Sinai to Calvary. For example, the holiness and justice of God: His fiery law discovers the glory of these attributes; but how much more do they shine forth in "the bruising and putting to grief" of God's own Son! The necessary connection between sin and punishment: that is seen in the threatenings of the law and their execution against the workers of iniquity; but how much more in that HE could not be spared! The evil of sin: that is to be seen in the law; but how much more in the grace of the Father

and of the Son, manifested in the sufferings of Jesus! Sin is against such a God! The law may, and will, constrain him to plead guilty; but at the cross he will feel godly shame that he could have covered his transgressions. The law will convince him that he is a sinner; but it is the love of the cross that will discover to him the baseness and malignity of his sins. The law will convince him that he lies helpless in the hands of a sovereign God, but he will feel repelled from His presence; the cross will bring him ingenuously to confess that he deserves the lowest hell, and yet it will attract him to that God whom he has offended and who can in a moment cast him there. The law may wring from him bitter tears of sorrow over his folly and madness and guilt in forsaking his own mercy; but at the cross the sluices of his soul will be opened, and he will mourn over his piercing of the Lord of glory. The law may bring him to see that a conformity to the Divine image is desirable; but at the cross, while he prays, "Be merciful to my unrighteousness," he will with the same earnestness cry, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

It is there, at the cross of Christ, that repentance first springs up; it is there that the believer exercises it. It is a work which no other combination of power than that which meets at the cross can accomplish. Now, if even the saints on earth say, "God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;" if they desire, could they attain to it, to be kept under its humbling, quickening, and transforming power; if they long for its triumph throughout the world in the conversion of all nations; what joy will be felt in the manifestation of its saving power by those whose perceptions of its glory are unclouded, who see the face of the Lamb, the Light and

the Glory of heaven! more especially what joy will be felt by those to whom it was the power of God to their salvation! Will not their minds often revert to the memorable time in their history when they first felt its drawing power, and when, having found it subduing their hard hearts, they were persuaded that there was *nothing* too hard for it?

4. Repentance is the turning of the soul to God as its Rest and everlasting Portion. It adds one to the number of God's servants and worshippers. It is the beginning of a new and blessed life,—a life of peace amidst trial, a life of holiness, a life of fruitfulness that is glorifying to God, edifying to the Church, and often rich in blessings to others. It is a turning from all sin. Was the repenting sinner a careless, irreverent, profane man? He is so no more; he is a fearer and a worshipper of God in secret, in his household, in public. Was he a drunkard, an unclean person, a neglecter of the Bible, a covetous man? was he a self-righteous man? or a passionate and revengeful man? he is now God's steward; he is a new creature in his thoughts, desires, aims, and in all the relations of life. It is a turning to God to seek His face, and to walk with Him. If he was an openly immoral or profane man, the change will be the more marked, and the Church will glorify God in him. He will now bring forth fruits meet for repentance; and he will begin to live indeed, in the strength of grace, for God's glory and for eternity. The greatness and blessedness of the change are known in heaven; and there is joy there.

How different, then, is heaven from what many think of it! There is no other heaven than the heaven which rejoices over the repenting sinner; and if we would ever enter it, we must be made meet for its employments, we must sympathize with its inhabitants in their desires and

joys; else it would be no heaven to us. We must ourselves be the subjects of true repentance.

We see here what, next to their own salvation, and the edification of the Church, ought most to concern not only ministers of Christ, but His people, namely, the conversion of sinners. And "he that converteth a sinner from the error of his way saves a soul from death, and hides a multitude of sins." We learn also—let it not be overlooked—the preciousness of *one* soul in the sight of God, one sinner, be he who he may. Let us ask ourselves whether it would give us greater joy to learn that one of our dearest relatives had been converted to God, than that the good things of this life were showered down upon him. I do not say, though we could answer this question in the affirmative, that we should consider that, in itself, as a sufficient evidence of our own conversion; but surely, if we cannot thus answer it, it is a sure sign that we are unconverted. And may there not be many professing Christians who could not thus honestly answer it? Oh! how cruel to choose and prefer for a dear relative and fellow-sinner his present enjoyment of worldly happiness with momentary exposure to eternal ruin, to his experience of a grace that would detach his affections from the world, but that would prepare him for glorifying God on earth and enjoying Him through eternity! And yet it is natural for the men of this world to discountenance that anxious absorbing sense of the all-importance of eternal things which ever accompanies true repentance; because they would stake the souls of their dearest relatives, as they do their own, on the possibilities of a future repentance when the good things of this life shall have lost their relish. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

What a reproof is given in this passage to coldness in seeking the conversion of sinners—cold desires, cold

prayers, cold speaking of the things which concern their peace! What solemn and affecting earnestness becomes the gospel ministry, in which men are called to repentance and besought to be reconciled to God!

What a call is here given to the impenitent! How many such are there, who, in their own estimation, "need no repentance." The Lord seek out such, and send the word home! How is the necessity of repentance set forth in this passage, and its greatness, and its preciousness! With what a solemn and beseeching voice do the angels and the redeemed address the Christless sinner! But oh, above all, what a voice comes from the Throne! "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Yes! and if these words should find out some hitherto careless, unbroken sinner; and if he were found now before God bemoaning himself because of sin, and crying for mercy and a new heart, the tidings would ere long reach heaven,—and there would be joy there. The Lord vouchsafe this great mercy, for His name's sake!

SERMON XIII.

"LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH."

2 PETER I. 1.

THERE are two truths contained in these words, which, by the help of God, I will endeavour to illustrate; the preciousness of faith, and its substantial identity in all believers.

I. With respect to its preciousness, I would notice, first, its *Author*. It is God's command to us to "believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ;"[1] it is our solemn duty to comply with this command; and faith is our act, the exercise of our minds and hearts. But the ability thus to exercise them is of God. The spiritual illumination and the holy disposition implied in faith are the effects of the Holy Spirit's gracious operations on the mind and heart.[2] Consider especially these words, "Unto you it is given" (literally, freely given), "in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him,"[3] etc., in connection with the words that precede and follow our text, "them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." That is, faith is God's gift, and it is for Christ's sake it is bestowed. To deny this truth, avowedly or virtually, is to deny the work of the Holy Spirit, and to subvert the gospel of Christ.

[1] 1 John iii. 23.

[2] See 1 Cor. ii. 14; Eph. ii. 8; Gal. v. 22; 2 Cor. iv. 3. [3] Phil. i. 29.

Those who teach men that they can believe of themselves, or believe at any time they please, are leading them in the way to destruction. We cannot be too jealous of the preaching that overlooks the necessity for the Holy Spirit's agency to work faith in the heart, or that overlooks the truth that *every* spiritual blessing—faith, as surely as forgiveness—is the purchase of the blood or righteousness of God our Saviour, and bestowed by the Father in His sovereign grace. If there is nothing more in faith than the exercise of my poor corrupted reason on the truth of God, then indeed is it worthless, of the earth, earthy. But if it be a divine light, kindled within by the Father of Lights, if it be God's own special work, the fruit of that very grace that moved Him to send His Son to be the Saviour of the world, and of the putting forth of the "exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe,"[1] then is it precious beyond all calculation. If, when essaying to hear the voice of the Son of God, and to come to Him for life, under experience of the heaviest of all the burdens and the chiefest of all the plagues that oppress me, an unbelieving heart, I have no encouragement to look to Him to deliver me from this burden and to draw me to Himself, then there is no gospel and no hope for me. But if I have a warrant to say, "Help my unbelief, save me from this the chiefest and deadliest of my sins, increase my faith, save me from all that is in sin,"—then this is the gospel that I need and that has in it reviving, supporting and drawing power.

2. Its *foundation* shows its preciousness. Just in proportion to the magnitude of the interests involved in belief of the gospel, is the importance of a sure ground of confidence that it is no "cunningly devised fable." Now, the foundation of faith is, that the gospel is God's testimony.

[1] Eph. i. 19.

The ultimate foundation of faith may be said indeed to lie beyond this, and to be the glorious perfections and immutability of the great God: faith thus rests ultimately on the Source of being—the Foundation of truth, of excellence, and of power. But its immediate foundation is the testimony of God. It does not rest on the testimony of man, —of any individual holy man, or of any association of good though fallible men. I do not believe because the Church believes. That would be a poor shifting foundation on which to rest one's hopes for eternity. Nor does my faith rest on the conviction to which I have reached after the examination of the evidences of Christianity, that it is of God; though that conviction is, in its own place, of great importance, and though it will invariably follow a candid and serious examination of such evidences. It does not rest on my having arrived at a satisfying conclusion that the system of doctrines in the Bible is worthy of God, while no other system is; though this conclusion is of importance, and helpful too. I do not believe because my judgment has passed a favourable verdict on the doctrines of the gospel. Nor does faith rest on internal feelings and exercises. I do not see or feel, and therefore believe. I do not find a good heart within, and on this ground expect mercy. I do not find myself prepared for Christ, and on this ground, in connection with what Christ has done, look for salvation. I find no good heart within to encourage me to approach God. I have no previous experience of His mercy to embolden me to trust in Him; but, under the pressure of guilt and misery, I approach God on the bare warrant of His own Word.

Faith rests on the testimony of God, "Thus saith the Lord." Faith is exercised when God is recognised as speaking in His own Word. Hence the transcendent importance of the truth concerning the inspiration of the Holy

Scriptures. Men, calling themselves Christian teachers, are labouring in our day, more or less openly, in the work in which avowed infidels in former generations spent their strength, namely, that of undermining the Church's faith in the trustworthiness of the Holy Scriptures as God's written revelation of His will for our salvation. If the Bible be not God's own Book, written by holy men as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, then there is no infallible foundation of faith. If it be not truly God's pure and sure Word for our salvation, so that we can and ought to surrender ourselves implicitly to its guidance to be illuminated, comforted, and moulded by it, then the foundations of hope are taken away. Because there are disputed passages, and various readings of some passages, and because there are other things left to try us, men who hate the humbling doctrines of the cross begin again the old work of fighting against God's Word. But He who so wondrously watched over it and preserved it for His Church in past generations will watch over it still; and, unaffected by such cavils and calumnies, souls thirsting for salvation will still come to its living waters and drink. God will make His powerful and melting voice to be heard in His own Word. He will make the careless sinner hear it in such language as this,—"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them," "The wages of sin is death," "Dead in trespasses and sins;" and will thus quicken his conscience, subdue his stoutness of heart, and force from him the cry, "What must I do to be saved?" And He will make the anxious sinner hear it in such wondrous language as this,—"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way, and live; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" "God so loved the world that he gave his

only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin;" "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;"—and through such words will He work hope in His mercy, and produce precious faith.

Now faith in this respect, as resting on God's testimony, is precious; for it honours God by crediting His Word notwithstanding all improbabilities in the judgment of sight and sense, thus stamping guilt and folly on the unbelief by which man first departed from God. "Ye shall not surely die," was the assertion of the Tempter. Our first parents believed him, and made God a liar while they were surrounded with the evidences and filled with the experience of His glory and excellence and truth and goodness. On the other hand, faith, in the face of a guilty conscience and notwithstanding unacquaintedness with the Divine mercy, credits His Word, and gives Him glory as the God to whom "it is impossible to lie." Do you feel your need of mercy, of peace, of purity; and yet do you keep back from God till you can find something in yourself that will encourage you to approach Him? You may look within; but if God is showing you your heart and life in the light of truth, you will find nothing but corruption there. But come on the ground of Jehovah's testimony. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Faith is precious therefore, because, resting on a foundation firmer than the heavens, it cannot be disappointed. All other expectations may wither; but until God fail,

until Christ cease to be able and willing to perform all His engagements to the believing sinner, till there cease to be such a thing as truth in the universe, the expectations of faith will not be disappointed. Are you willing to take God at His word? Then fear not; let not the immensity of the great things promised, set side by side with your unworthiness, lead you to stagger at God's word of grace. Wonderful indeed that such words as these, "The wages of sin is death," should be followed by the words, "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord;" but God's ways are not man's ways. Have you been trying to take home such great words to yourself? Do you find it hard to do this? Yet against hope, believe in hope. He who "quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were," can in due time bring your soul into a wealthy place, and enable you to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3. The *Object* of faith shows its preciousness. Faith, having for its foundation the word or testimony of God, terminates indeed on the whole of God's revealed will, more immediately on the truth concerning man's lost condition and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ; but peculiarly on Christ Himself. It is not the mercy of God separated from Christ, nor even the righteousness of Christ apart from Christ, but Christ Himself. The object of saving faith, then, is not bare truth, however glorious that truth may be, but, in its primary and peculiar acting, it is the essential Word, the living Truth, Christ himself. It is the nature of faith, or rather the way of God in dealing savingly with a sinner, to lead him forth from himself to Christ in the gospel. Within he finds nothing but guilt, darkness, misery; but, guided by God's testimony, he goes forth to Christ. God says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh

away the sin of the world;" "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it;" "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." What the self-emptied sinner seeks is what will meet all the wants of his sin-laden immortal spirit in the prospect of eternity—what will meet his guilt, his distance from God, his spiritual nakedness and pollution and poverty. On this side Christ, he will seek for this in vain. But, guided by the word and Spirit of God, he sees Jesus:—the Sun of Righteousness breaks forth on his night of gloom and darkness. He sees One uniting the glories of Divinity and the beauties of humanity in His wondrous Person; One, appointed to be the Redeemer of lost souls, appearing in the world and working out redemption; infinite in glory, in merit, in mercy, in power to save; perfectly suited to all his needs and desires; and, notwithstanding all past sin and all present corruption and unworthiness, inviting him to receive Him as *his* Saviour. And with the whole heart he receives Christ, and takes Him as his own.

As the great object of faith is thus Christ himself, so *that* in Christ, on which at first it mainly fixes, is His Priestly office,—in other words, the suitableness of Christ as the atoning and interceding Surety for his forlorn condition as a condemned unrighteous man. But, as faith looks to Christ Himself, so it terminates on *all* in Christ,—Christ as Mediator, Prophet, Priest, King, Physician, Shepherd. It comes with the soul's guilt to His atoning blood, that it may find peace for the conscience; with its spiritual nakedness, that it may be clothed with the spotless robe of His righteousness; with its darkness, that, anointed with His eye-salve, it may see; with its pollution, that through His grace it may be made clean; with its confessed unworthiness to be called a son, that it may be put among the children; with its emptiness of all good and

all peace, that it may be filled out of His fulness. And thus does it teach the soul to say, "I have found One who gives life to dead sinners, and gives it more abundantly; who is 'all in all.' I am ignorant and dark; but 'in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,' and He is able to make me wise unto salvation. I am deserving of eternal condemnation; but He hath 'borne my sins in his own body on the tree,' and in Him am I justified and accepted. I am defiled and polluted, but He can sanctify me wholly; I am poor, but He has unsearchable riches. I am black, and mean, and unworthy so much as to lift up my eyes to heaven; but my Redeemer is the Brightness and the Glory of heaven, and in Him I even now sit in heavenly places."

How precious is faith, considered in this respect! It is true it is its Object that is so glorious, and faith must be thought of only as that which puts the soul in possession of Christ; yet may we not say, "Happy, precious faith, that encircles and enfolds so glorious a Person—Him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, the Desire of all nations, the Beloved of the Father, the Adored of angels, the Friend of sinners, the proved Friend who gave Himself for them, the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother! happy faith, that clasps a Saviour!"

4. The preciousness of faith appears in its *effects* or *operations*,—what is attached to or follows its exercise; and this is nothing less than the salvation of the soul. And salvation is connected with faith in a way in which it is not connected with any other grace—with repentance, or love, or self-denial; because it is by faith we are united to Christ, through whom we are justified and sanctified. Therefore is it said, "By grace are ye saved, through faith." Therefore is the Christian life the life of faith, and the Christian walk and conflict the walk and fight of faith.

For not only is it by faith we are justified, to the exclusion of repentance or love; but faith has the pre-eminence among the graces in the carrying on of the Christian's sanctification.

To enter fully, then, on a specification of the operations of saving faith, would be to enter on a description of the Christian's life and the Christian's walk through this world of darkness and conflict to the world of light and of rest. Let us notice a few of its main actings or fruits.

It brings peace to the conscience. The greater number of men are unaware, or do not think of the power of conscience,—that (under God's restraining hand) their whole peace is in its hands, and that it is mighty enough to make a heaven or a hell within. A Cain or a Judas could tell us of its power to accuse and condemn. And he who has been savingly dealt with by God's Spirit could tell us of the inefficacy of everything but the blood of Christ to silence its accusations, and of the heavenly calm and rest consequent on the application of that blood. When conscience is fairly aroused as the minister of God's law in the heart, vain is the attempt to quiet its voice by any of the ordinary applications which men use to soothe it. Resolutions to amend or repent, or a looking to the mercy of God apart from the righteousness of Christ, may quiet it when it is not directed in its accusations by the convincing Spirit of God; but they are utterly rejected by it when, under His guidance, it charges the soul with its sin and requires it to answer for sin. Then nothing can quiet it but the precious blood of the spotless Lamb of God, shed for the remission of the sins of many. With this blood the justice of God was satisfied; on the ground of its shedding, a full and free pardon is proclaimed to sinners. Faith announces the truth to the conscience, that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Con-

science acknowledges the validity of the plea. The winds and the waves cease, and there is a great calm. And, as it is the faith through which we receive the forgiveness of sins that brings peace to the conscience at first, so it is through the continued exercise of faith in the blood of Christ that peace is preserved, and that the conscience is kept pure or cleansed from day to day.

It purifies the heart. Every one who is in earnest in the business of religion feels his need of having the heart purified from sin, in order to seeing God. And many are the ways men take to cleanse their hearts from sin, many the lying vanities they follow while seeking this great end. But we cannot reason ourselves, or scourge ourselves, or fast or pray ourselves into a change of heart. Only faith, as an instrument, can do this; eyeing the death of Christ, the view of sin given in Christ's death, Christ's end in dying, Christ's love in dying, Christ's victory over sin. It is thus the heart is humbled, and melted, and turned from sin and drawn to God.

It overcomes the world, by the firm hold which it takes of God's testimony regarding its vanity, and the view which it presents to the soul of the better country. It keeps the soul, by committing it to Christ's keeping. It fetches constant supplies from Christ's fulness for the building up of the soul in holiness. It conducts the soul through the wilderness of this world by the narrow way of humiliation, self-denial, conflict, and dependence, till it reaches Jordan, where it bids it a final adieu—at least as the faith which saves. "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

II. Secondly, our text declares the substantial identity of faith in all believers. They have "one faith," as they are one body, amidst all the diversified appearances which faith may assume—which are many. For example: 1. Faith ordinarily at first is as a grain of mustard seed; it

must grow; and there is a great difference between the faith of the child and of the grown-up man. Then, 2. There may be great differences among believers in regard to their knowledge of divine things; though the strength or weakness of their faith will not necessarily be according to their measure of knowledge. 3. Faith may be strong in one, and comparatively little or weak in another. Abraham was "strong in faith."[1] Against all outward probabilities and all experience, and though God tried him with delay in fulfilling His promise, he "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief." Job was strong in faith. His hearth was bare, he was left utterly destitute, his body was subjected to painful disease, his friends would persuade him that he was a hypocrite; yea, "the arrows of the Almighty were within him, the poison whereof drank up his spirit:"—yet he said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."[2] Faith was strong in the centurion:[3] it went beyond Christ's outward appearance directly to His Divine power, and it knew no doubt:—"Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." It was strong in the woman of Canaan; she would not be driven away from Christ, even by His seeming frown, till He blessed her. Again, it was weak in the disciples,[4] and in Peter.[5] Then, 4. The faith of the Old Testament Church differed from that of the New Testament Church in respect that it was a faith exercised on a promised Saviour, not yet manifested; while the latter is exercised on the Saviour as having come, as having finished the work, and as now at God's right hand. The views of an Old Testament believer, obtained through the promise, the types, and the figures, must necessarily have been more dim than those of the New Testament believer, now that the glorious mystery of the incarnation has been fully revealed; though it

[1] Rom. iv. 20. [2] Job xiii. 15. [3] Matt. viii. 10.
[4] Matt. viii. 26; xvi. 8. [5] Matt. xiv. 31.

does not necessarily follow that his faith may have been weaker, or less powerful as a principle of obedience and devotedness to God. And, in like manner, 5. Among those even who possess the same full completed revelation of God's will, the members of Christ's Church now on earth—and these we regard as comprehending all who hold the Head, who believe in man's lost state by nature, in redemption by Christ's blood, and regeneration by Christ's Spirit (for we dare not regard as belonging to the Church those who deny the divinity of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, nor can we consider Popery as Christ's though we doubt not the Lord has His own in that corrupt communion),—even among these there are not only many differences of opinion on points of faith and government, but there may be different views of the nature of precious faith itself more or less in accordance with the Word of God, and a Christian experience more or less in harmony with the recorded experience of the cloud of witnesses.

And yet, if we should suppose representatives of the different churches or Christian communions gathered together, and the miracle of Pentecost to be repeated, and Spirit-taught ministers to be discoursing to them of the wonderful Person and work of Christ, of the trust and worship and love and devotedness which are His due, and the separation from the world and the brotherly love which become all who are His, we should find that they had all—Germans or French, Caffres, Greenlanders, Chinese, or South Sea Islanders,—the "like precious faith," and that they were of one mind and one heart in regard to the four things we have mentioned as making faith "precious." We should not find that any one of them gave himself the glory of his being a believer:—"By the grace of God I am what I am." We should find in each of them the same reverence for the Word of the living God as the only rule of faith and obedience, and the same superlative esteem for

Jesus Christ. We should find that as the objects of the same love, bought with the one price, taught by the one Spirit, members of the same body, they had the same faith and the same love, the same conflicts and temptations; and were journeying the same way, and undergoing the same training for the services of that place where, seeing eye to eye because seeing Christ as He is, and because like Him, they shall unite as with one heart in saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

To apply our remarks. We do not now enter fully into a description of the faith which is so precious, and which is "to the saving of the soul;" yet let us observe that it is not a mere assent to the truths of God's Word, such as may be given to any facts in history, and any truths in astronomy; but it is an assent to them as Divine truths on Divine testimony, and it is such a persuasion of their importance as leads one to throw open the heart to their reception, and to invite their full operation. It is not an impression; it is not a faith resting on feeling or that is produced in the commotion of ignorant excitement; but a faith resting altogether on the testimony of God in His Word; fenced in, in its exercise, by the Word; and weaker or stronger in exercise, just in the measure in which God's testimony is seen and realized. Further, it is not something which is quite unintelligible in its nature. It is a heaven-born principle, the effect of Divine light imparted and of Divine life communicated, but yet the most reasonable of all principles; such a sure persuasion of the truth and greatness of the realities of the spiritual world as that one cannot deal with them practically as though they were fables, but must strive to experience, to act out and to manifest their full influence.

Let Christians seek to grow in the knowledge of the necessity and excellence of "precious faith," and be en-

couraged to exercise it, and to glorify Christ by casting every burden upon Him—the burden of sin, of affliction, of a very narrow path of duty. The foundation abideth, though you may be tossed. Faith must needs be tried. But Christ prays that it may not "fail." Does sin oppress you,—the remembrance of sin, or a sense of present sin? He is the Lord your Righteousness, and your Peace. Are you troubled with a dark mind? He is the Light of dark souls. Or with an obdurate heart? With Him is the Spirit of grace and of supplications. Are you weak? In Him is everlasting strength. Are you poor? With Him are unsearchable riches. Are you unstable, and have you a treacherous heart? Yet He abideth faithful, and He has promised restoring grace. Glorify Christ, by giving Him all your works to work in you. He is the same now as when He took David out of the "fearful pit;" as when He kept Peter from sinking; as when He brought Paul to say, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me."

But do you possess this faith? If not, become partakers of it. The "word of faith" is preached to you; the Object of faith is presented to you; He speaks to you the same gracious words which He addressed to sinners in past times, and invites you to the same hopes; He asks you to receive Him as your all, that He may do all for you. Come to Christ, and your state will be changed, and your heart will be changed, and the things that are now your "gain" you will count "loss for Christ." And you will be no longer without a worthy object of existence, or with an object bounded by time and the grave; but you will have a glorious object of existence—to attain to holiness and to heaven. "He that believeth on him is not condemned." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

SERMON XIV.

PEACE WITH GOD.[1]

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."—ROM. v. 1.

THE apostle having established and explained the doctrine of a sinner's justification in the sight of God by faith in Christ without deeds of law, proceeds at the beginning of this chapter to open up the blessedness of a justified state.

Let us remember what is meant by being justified. To justify is to make, to regard, and to pronounce a sinner to be righteous or to stand right in relation to God's law; not only absolving or delivering him from the sentence of condemnation attached to transgression, but bestowing on him a title to the life which is the reward of obedience. It is not, then, a change in the sinner's disposition or mind in regard to the law and the Lawgiver, but it is a change of the relation in which he stands to the law and the Lawgiver. It is not such a change in his heart, as that he no longer hates but loves the holy law and the righteous Lawgiver; but it is such a change in his state or standing in reference to the law, as that it no longer frowns upon him as a transgressor and denounces its terrible threatenings against him, but that, on the contrary, it looks upon him with as much complacency as though he

[1] This sermon was preached in November 1856, as part of a course of Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans.

had never sinned, and further regards him as entitled to its gracious rewards. When God justifies the sinner, He not only delivers him from condemnation, but He invests him with a right to eternal life.

Let us bear in mind also the way of justification. We are justified "freely by God's grace;" this being an act of the purest mercy; nothing in man, considered in himself, moving God to bestow this blessing upon him, except his misery and his need of it,—the sinner who is justified being "an ungodly man." We are justified "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," or "by the blood of Christ," or "the righteousness of God;" this act being one of untainted and glorious righteousness as well as of grace; God being just when He justifies, because He justifies the sinner on the foundation of the perfect atonement and the everlasting righteousness of the Surety, His beloved Son. And we are justified "by faith." Let us remember also the nature of justifying faith, the sinner's duty and the sinner's act, yet the fruit of Divine grace;—that it is a cordial belief with application to one's-self of God's testimony concerning His Son; and that in the great matter of our justification it is opposed to all "deeds of law." It is not as a work, but as that which works not but rests upon the work of another, that it justifies. God's glory and our consolation meet in this new and wondrous way of acceptance. All boasting is excluded. Man is humbled, because he needs to be humbled; but he is lifted up and exalted in a Divine righteousness.

All other blessings may be said to follow in the train of justification. But we must distinguish between a right to the blessings or a warrant to appropriate them, and their actual sensible enjoyment. God's gracious aspect towards the believer is one thing; the believer's realizing of this, and consequent joy in God, is another thing. At the same

time the blessings of peace, hope, joy are matters of consciousness or personal experience. We conclude, therefore, that some enjoyment of them accompanies or follows justification by faith.

Although justification, the act of God "the Judge of all," does not, in itself, affect the disposition or nature of the justified man, yet it is in inseparable connection with faith that he is justified; and such is the nature of faith that it cannot be exercised on its glorious Object without certain effects following it corresponding to this its Object and its nature: and God has so ordered things in the gospel, or in His way of speaking peace to sinners, that while the truth regarding the way of acceptance, when received, humbles the sinner, and shuts him up to simple dependence on the sovereign mercy of God in Christ, and simple trust in the blood of Christ, it also inspires peace and hope and joy, as in its fulness it is unfolded to his view and apprehended by him.

No doubt, this statement must be somewhat qualified or guarded. There are exceptional cases:—cases of peculiar bodily or mental temperament; or cases of special dealing of God with the soul, when He may see it necessary with a view to its establishment and ultimate settled peace to keep it low and permit it to be sore tempted (*e.g.*, Halyburton, Bunyan), or to keep such views of sin before the mind—making it *possess* its sins—as may hinder the experience, except in small measure, of the peace that would stream in on the soul from the cross. For we must not forget that God is a Father who deals in infinite wisdom with His people, training them with a minuteness that will not be known in this world, and adapting His dealings with each one of them to their temperament, their dispositions, their outward condition, to the work designed for them in the world, and to the glory prepared for them hereafter. Nor

must we forget that for every spiritual apprehension of the truth, and therefore for all the effects of the truth whether of a joyful or sorrowful character, they are as continually dependent on the grace of His Spirit working in them as they are dependent for continued acceptance on the exercise of His mercy towards them.

With these exceptions, or keeping these things in view, we are warranted to conclude that such blessings as the apostle enumerates in this chapter are appropriated and enjoyed according to the measure of faith,—of faith eyeing God in the character in which He is exhibited in the gospel, as "just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

There are two views to be taken of the blessing of peace with God. First, God is at peace with the believer through the blood of His Son. The wrath of God abides on the unbeliever. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." What nothing else can effect, the blood of the cross has effected. It has satisfied the justice of God, and made peace; and when the sinner exercises faith in it for deliverance and reconciliation to God, God's wrath as the Judge is turned away from him, because that wrath was poured out on the Surety, and, agreeably to God's appointment, what the Surety suffered and merited is counted to the sinner who trusts in Him. With the same complacency, then, with which God regards the sacrifice of His Son, does He regard the sinner trusting in it and pleading its merits. He becomes to him the God of peace, and makes a covenant of peace with Him. And this is the common privilege of believers in all its extent. Though they may share largely in the calamitous dispensations which proclaim that God has a controversy with our earth, though at times He may seem to contend with them in such a way as might indicate that their sins

are unpardoned, yet He is at perfect peace with them as though they had never sinned, and His everlasting love rests on them with satisfaction. We should strive to realize this as the "heritage" of every justified man. We need not fear that we shall be feeding presumptuous hope by laying hold of a truth which involves the completeness of Christ's propitiation, the riches of the Father's love, and the security of His covenant-people.

Yet, secondly, we can conceive all this to be true of an individual, but unless he has some means of laying hold of the privilege, some ground of hope of an interest in it that commends itself to his judgment as sure and safe, or some revelation of the character of God as the God of peace suited to his need of such a blessing, there will be no felt or sure peace in his soul. I observe, therefore, that this includes *conscious* peace, or peace of conscience. Not only that God is at peace with him, His wrath being turned away; but that he has peace towards God, his fears of wrath being removed, and this according to the measure and the exercise of faith.

There is no man, be he ever so careless and worldly, if he admit that there is a God who will bring us to judgment, but must also admit that peace with God is at the foundation of true happiness. And, let men say what they will, there is no man whose conscience, till he succeed in searing it, does not tell him that he is a sinner, that God is displeased with him because of sin, and that, if the controversy between him and his Maker be not settled before death, fearful will be the meeting with the Judge. Amidst all the forgetfulness of God, the ungodliness and the worldliness that prevail around us, all the sad attempts to hide from themselves the greatness of the controversy, we venture to say that were the heart of every one we know to be opened up to us, these two things would be found to be true;

they would be verified in the case of the most thoughtless of our fellow-immortals. And amidst the many attempts —the result of these two feelings—to obtain present rest and peace in some other way than God's way; whether by trusting in good works, dispositions or intentions, as many do; by having recourse to outward observances, fastings, mortifying of the body or to great laboriousness in the work of salvation; or by delaying the present consideration of the matter in the lying hope of making their peace with God before they die; or by taking refuge in false views of the mercy of God, as though it must needs at the last stand between them and punishment, it will also be found that in none of these ways will peace of conscience be obtained. I do not only say solid satisfying peace, but such peace as will commend itself to the conscience as true peace when the light of God's holy law is let in on the conscience. That light may be excluded, false views of the law may be cherished, a new edition of it suited to man's exigencies and corruptions may be got up, and thus the heart may be deceived and refuges of lies clung to: but if God's law be what the Scriptures declare it to be in its requirements and its sanctions—and men's own reason and conscience, did they but listen to their dictates, pronounce that it must be so, because no other law would be worthy of the majesty of Heaven—and if man's relation to the law and the Lawgiver be what the Scriptures declare, true peace cannot be found in any way except that of God's devising, which provides for the magnifying of the law when peace is spoken to the sinner. Oh, then, how sad to take up with a peace which is the peace of ignorance and of wilful rejection of the truth with regard to the law of the Most High!

When that truth begins to be received; when the Holy Spirit arrests the attention of the sinner, causes to sink into his heart the all-importance of attaining to peace with God,

turns away his mind from the world's views of such stupendous and awful realities as God, sin, eternity, fixes his mind on the testimony of the Word on these things,—especially its testimony regarding the claims of God, the majesty of His law, and his own state as a transgressor and an enemy, —then, whatever else he may have to occupy and engross him, to solicit his care and affections, he feels as he never felt before that "one thing is needful." And then, in the recesses of his own spirit, in his conscience—his awakened conscience—bowing to the rightful supremacy of God's law, he has a witness to his misery as under condemnation, a busy and continued remembrancer of past forgotten sins, an accuser who spares him not, and whom he cannot silence, because he pleads for that God whom he has so long insulted, and a witness also to the impossibility of his being pardoned and finding rest except in such a way as will meet all the demands of the law upon him and as will fully satisfy the justice of God. Such is the effect on the conscience of the coming of God's holy law, or its application by the Holy Spirit; and therefore the question which the awakened sinner seeks to have solved is, "How can God's anger be turned away? How can I be delivered from the guilt of sin? Is there a way? and if so, what is it?" What shall he do? What shall he try? Where shall he turn for relief? He may have rested before in outward reformation or observances, or in his repentance. He cannot do this now. What can all this avail to take away the sin of the soul? Were he able to yield perfect obedience to the law for the time to come, how can he dispose of the sins that are past, which are registered in God's book, and in the book of conscience too? He has made acquaintance with the solemn truth—has come to realize it as a truth and no exaggerated statement —that every sin must be accounted for and must be dealt

with by the justice of God. Though he were able to make himself clean, though he could bring himself to love God for the time to come, the past must be reckoned for. But all his attempts and strivings to purify his soul serve only to discover to him increasingly the strength of his depravity and the greatness of his pollution; so that, even supposing the past to be blotted out by an exercise of pure mercy, without some wondrous provision that would change his relation to the law, what hope could he have for the time to come? He sees God as all terror:—how can his heart go forth in love to Him? An accusing conscience follows him to his knees and to every attempted holy exercise:—how can he have any heart to seek after purity, even if it were not in other respects so hopeless by any efforts of his, while he is pressed down with guilt? The more he makes acquaintance with God's sacred justice, the less heart has he for any attempts to purify his soul; till at length he gives over his striving and labouring, and lays himself down at the footstool of Sovereign Mercy.

Now, it is in its suitableness to such a case as this that the glory of the gospel appears. For that gospel makes known the propitiation effected by the blood of the incarnate Son of God, the sacrifice of a suitable and all-sufficient Surety accepted by the Judge and exhibited in His word to be relied upon and trusted in by sinners. Here is something suited to give relief and peace; here is what the law-pursued and conscience-struck sinner is seeking after. Here is One ready to be his mediator, One whom the offended God has appointed to this work and in whom He delights, One who has mediated by His own blood, who has stood between sinners and the storm—bearing it in His own body on the tree—One ready to make over to him, however guilty and vile, all the merit of the sacrifice which is of a sweet-smelling savour to God; so that all his

guilt shall be taken away, and that he shall be enabled, while smiting on his breast, to look up to God and to say, "Christ—yea Christ whom I have pierced—hath died, and Thine own testimony is that His blood cleanseth from all sin." And therefore, when the reality and the infinite value of the atonement are apprehended, when the Judge is seen as satisfied and as on a throne of grace waiting to be gracious, that which He has provided for sheltering the sinner and for purging the conscience is enough to meet all the requirements of conscience and to give him hope in His presence; and so, while he looks to "the precious blood of Christ," and essays to trust in it for the purging away of all his sin, there begins to flow in a blessed rest and quiet on the conscience. As the cloud of wrath which burst on the Surety spent itself on His blessed Person, so the wrath which the sinner saw and felt to be against him is now turned away; and these words begin to be understood, "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me."[1] "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them to their desired haven."[2]

This, then, is the peace which is the effect of being justified by faith. It is the fruit of the Spirit, without whose grace there is no true awakening, no sight of the blood of Christ, no faith in His blood; but, you will observe, it is the fruit of the Spirit making direct application of the blood of Christ. It is not as though the Holy Spirit dropped this peace into the heart apart from the word, and apart from a knowledge of the atonement. It is a peace which comes directly to the soul from the blood

of the cross; from that alone, apart from everything else it comes. It is the glory of the cross to have "made peace," and it is the glory of the cross to speak peace. It is a peace which reaches the soul only in connection with faith; and we cannot conceive of faith in Christ's blood being exercised without some measure of true peace following its exercise. As the blood of Christ had a sure efficacy in appeasing the wrath of God, it has a sure efficacy in purging the conscience; for the glad tidings of its virtue and of its exhibition in the gospel are by faith conveyed to the conscience.

Further, as this peace flows directly and altogether from the blood of Christ, to the exclusion of any ground of hope in the sinner; as, without any evidence and apart from any evidence of a work of grace on his heart, he has a warrant as an ungodly sinner to enjoy peace in looking to the blood of Christ; so it is substantially in the same way, on the warrant of the same free gospel, in the exercise of the same faith similarly exercised, that this peace is renewed in the believer's experience from day to day. He must examine himself whether he be "in the faith," and he ought to be encouraged by all his past experience to look afresh to Jesus with hope and expectation; but his soul-prosperity and the vigorous exercise of faith for all the exigencies of the Christian life must depend on his continued application, in the exercise of simple faith, to the Lord Jesus in His sacrifice for cleansing and peace-making;—applying not as one under condemnation—it is his infirmity or his sin if he do this—but, although a justified man and a child of God, applying as a sinner, needing as much the blood of Christ to cleanse his soul from the guilt he is continually contracting and to preserve peace as when he first looked to it for a full pardon and for peace, needing to look to it not as a

sanctified man but as a sinner. The more close his walk with God, the more will this be his exercise. The stronger his faith, the simpler it will be. And there will be very many seasons in his history, when he would sink again into "the fearful pit and the miry clay," unless it were a truth that he had the same warrant to come to Christ as when he first came to Him, and unless peace could flow in directly to his soul in the exercise of looking as a poor sinner to Jesus.

Before closing, I may observe still further that this inward peace, or sense of reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ, is to be distinguished from the peace which results from being reconciled to the character of God. Every justified man is altogether reconciled to the character of God, because he has been renewed in the spirit of his mind; and he enjoys rest in contemplating His glorious perfections. The two together make up "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding:" yet they are to be distinguished from each other. It is one thing to feel the torments of a sense of guilt; it is a distinct thing to feel the misery of a heart estranged from God, and of the conflict of lusts and evil passions. It is one thing to see God as pacified towards me, and to have peace in the prospect of a judgment-seat because my Surety will be the Judge: it is a distinct thing to feel my heart changed towards God, and to experience heart-rest in contemplating His character, in seeking His face and doing His will. It is very true that it is through the cross this twofold peace is conveyed or created,—the cross, unveiled and carried home in its power by the Holy Spirit. But the one is the direct effect of a view of the cross in what we must call its primary aspect as an atoning death; the other is the immediate effect of a view of the cross as the death of the Son of God, in infinite love, to redeem us from iniquity and

to bring us unto God. When the blood of Christ is seen making peace, peace is conveyed to the conscience; when Jesus is seen dying for sin to redeem us from sin, the heart is melted and humbled and drawn to God. They accompany one another—though they are not necessarily enjoyed in the same measure, for there may be peace of conscience while there is great dispeace because of the workings of sin—and they exercise an important influence on each other. It is just as faith keeps the conscience clean by the application of the blood of Christ, that there will be hopeful working in the business of sanctification; that the blessed hope of deliverance from sin will cheer and gladden the soul; and that there will be a tender walk with God, which has as its attendant the "great peace" they have "which love God's law."[1] On the other hand, let sin be regarded in the heart, and no peace is then fetched from the precious blood of Christ; no *true* peace is then enjoyed. "Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."[2]

The subject is capable of application to various cases of the child of God. Is he in darkness or doubt in regard to his state; having no present evidence of being a child of God, unable to discern in himself that reverential fear, that unselfish, fervent love, that genuine humbleness of mind, which are some of the marks of His children? Does he fear lest he may never yet have looked aright to the blood of Christ? Yet let him look to it, as one who has no other refuge, till it assert its power in giving peace, and till the love of the cross draw forth the love of his heart to Him who "died for us, while we were yet sinners." Or is there a condemning heart within, the effect of giving place to

[1] Ps. cxix. 165. [2] 1 John iii. 19-21.

sloth, or pride, or worldliness,—the effect of unfaithfulness, of going away from the Lord? Let him, looking to this blood, confess his transgressions to the Lord, and the iniquity of his sin shall be forgiven. Or is he bowed down under a sense of corruption, in heaviness because chained to a "body of death"? In the precious blood of Christ he may find peace, and in looking to it entertain the assurance of being sanctified wholly.

Are there any in trouble of mind—needing rest, and, knowing that they have to do with God, needing a sure ground of hope for eternity—afraid of deceiving themselves; having no hope but in the blood of Christ, yet rarely and but in very small measure experiencing peace in essaying to trust in it? Yet let them still look there, and there only, praying that the Holy Spirit would open up to them the glory of His sacrifice.

But have we a peace that has not come from the cross? It is a false peace. Let us be persuaded of this, and awaking to the magnitude of the question at issue, seek peace in God's way.

Through faith in Jesus' blood, *you* may now have peace, whoever you are. This is the condemnation,—that men refuse to rest in it.

FRAGMENT.

III. THE SINNER'S OBLIGATION TO HAVE A NEW HEART.[1]

"*Make you a new heart.*" These words have a startling sound. The truths they teach are little thought of, and hard to be believed.

Many may acknowledge in general that it is their duty to repent; and they may experience no difficulty in acknowledging this, just because they have false and unscriptural views of what repentance is, because they think of repentance as a something that they can originate in their own minds and hearts when they please. But when the same great change is brought before them as consisting in this —a new heart; and when the words of God, "Make you a new heart," are really contemplated and considered by the sinner, then either he will be altogether perplexed as to the meaning of such language, or he will find his heart rising up against God for addressing him in such words as these. And I would just notice some of the objections which may suggest themselves to such an individual.

It may be thought—it has been thought, and said—"Am I not unable to do anything spiritually good? am I not told this in the Word of God? Is it not the very first truth which I am called to learn, that I am as unable

[1] Extracted from a sermon on Ezek. xviii. 31, preached in 1849.

to do anything spiritually good as a dead man is to perform the functions of natural life? Then how am I under obligation to possess this heart?" Now it is a solemn question, On what does our obligation rest to love, to believe, to obey God? It rests not on our present disposition of heart, but on our relation to God as His creatures, who are possessed of a reason, of a conscience, and of a will. And it rests on the infinite worthiness of God to be loved with the whole heart, and to be served with the whole life. And therefore the question is, What is the kind of inability which we would plead as an excuse? Oh! think of it, fellow-sinner! Is it the want of disposition? Then if because of the want of disposition we are not guilty, or not responsible, there is no such thing as sin at all. The sinner has but to forsake God, and he ceases to be responsible. But if you will not plead the inability that consists in want of disposition as an excuse, then what is the ability which you would have? Is it an ability which would make you independent of God? There is no such ability. The holy angels have it not. Christ's people on earth have it not. No doubt the believer is one who is endued with moral ability to love and serve God; but he needs the continued putting forth of the Holy Spirit's power to enable him to will or to do, to do anything aright to God's glory. And the main difference in *this* matter between the believer and the impenitent sinner is just this: that the believer in Jesus recognises his unchanging and infinite obligations to love the Lord his God with all his heart; the impenitent sinner does not: the believer in Jesus hangs upon God for the strength that he requires to enable him to serve God; the impenitent sinner refuses to do this.

Again, it has been thought, and said—it has been often said—"Does it not seem inconsistent with God's attribut-

ing the work to Himself (as He does throughout the Scriptures) that it should be said to the *sinner*, 'Make you a new heart'?" Now, it is very true that the work of regeneration is not man's work, but God's—the work of the Holy Spirit. But there is a something which the Holy Spirit will not and cannot do for us. It is not the Holy Spirit who believes for the soul; it is the soul that believes for itself. And it is not the Holy Spirit, it is the sinner, that turns from sin unto God. It is the Holy Spirit who inclines and enables him to believe and to turn; but it is his own act to believe on Christ and to turn from sin unto God; and the Holy Spirit cannot do this for him: therefore is it said, "Make you a new heart."

But it may again be thought and said, "Why does God *command* me to make me a new heart, when He knows that I am unable to do this—as unable as to create a world?" *Why?* Because He is gracious; because it is possible to obtain a new heart; because the way of salvation and of life has been opened up through His dear Son; because there is hope in Him for the chief of sinners; because God makes use of the threatenings and the expostulations of His Word in saving souls, in drawing them to Himself; and because He will have you to know, as a truth that will meet you on the great day of account, that He has no pleasure in your death:—"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?"[1] As surely as we are bound to believe that God is unchangeably just and good, and that He is infinitely gracious, we are bound to believe that He is sincere when He says to the sinner, "Why will ye die?" It were blasphemy to deny this; it is a great sin to question it. It is the ex-

[1] Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

pression of the compassion and the pity of the heart of God, when He says, "Why will ye die?"

But it may still be said, "What, after all, is the *use* of such a solemn call addressed to me, if my heart be really so evil, if my nature be really so corrupt? What is the use of it to *me?*" Fellow-sinner, what if there should be this main use of it—that you should learn that very truth which you profess to believe, the truth that your heart *is* thus evil! Yes, that your heart is so evil that you can not only stand out against the goodness of your Maker,—against His continued kindness and forbearance from day to day,—but that you can stand out against the exhibition of His marvellous love in Christ, against the voice of a beseeching and an expostulating God! What if there should be this lesson to learn, that your heart is indeed so evil as this; that it is no fancy—that it is a truth—that the love of God is not in you; and that, left to yourself, though followed by all the solemn threatenings that are written in the book of the law, and all the melting invitations of the everlasting gospel, you will still post headlong to perdition! What, I say, if you should have this solemn use to make, and this solemn lesson to learn, from these words, "Make you a new heart"!

Yes: learn your obligations, learn your spiritual helplessness, learn your guilt in that helplessness. Think you, when Christ said to the young man whom He loved, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," that He encouraged this young man to expect life through his own obedience? No; that would surely be a dreadful thought. But He sent him, so to speak, to the school of the law; that coming to know what the commandments meant, he might try if he could keep one of them, and learn that he had been ever a breaker of the commandments, instead of one who had ever kept them; that thus

the law might be his schoolmaster to lead him to Him who came to seek and to save not those who had kept the law from their youth, but those that are lost. Oh! it is just in this way that one is prepared for estimating the preciousness of the promises of a new heart.

And therefore we may learn from this subject, that, let the *authority* of God and let the *grace* of God in these words be recognised—let the heart, so to speak, be cast into the very mould and fashion of God's call to the sinner in these words,—and then, there is a true turning to the Lord.

And surely we must learn further, that if it be a duty to possess a new heart, then it must be a duty to use the means towards it. The Lord the Spirit stirs the soul up to activity; and from first to last, from the beginning of His gracious work to the close, it is in felt weakness that His strength is perfected, in utter helplessness that the strength of Jehovah the Spirit is perfected. Yes, men may pervert this blessed doctrine and may make it the minister of sloth; but when the Holy Spirit begins to work savingly on the heart of any sinner, then that soul ceases thus to pervert it. The more he feels that he cannot pray, the more he prays; the more he feels that all his doings and his earnestness will go for nothing unless Divine mercy interpose, arrest, and deliver him, the more earnest he is, the more laborious, in striving to enter in at the strait gate; and the more emptied he is of self-sufficiency, the more is he brought to look with hope to the promise of the Holy Spirit, and the more is he prepared for understanding and realizing its preciousness.

Therefore, fellow-sinner, fellow-traveller to eternity, here is a work—greater and more glorious, we admit, than the creation of a world—to be wrought in you; without which you must perish. It is no dream, it is the truth of God, that a state of never-ending existence awaits you; and

everything hastens that period when the final separation shall be made between the righteous and the wicked. Consider that if you perish, it is because you neglect prayer, cast off solemn thought, and take refuge from it in thoughts of the world and sin; because you *will* die!

Think that there is mercy for you; there is the forgiveness of your sins through the blood of Christ; there is renewing grace for you; there is a new heart to be obtained. Think of Jesus, the Saviour of the lost. Look to Him, come to Him. Oh! if your eye, as a lost sinner, were towards Jesus, you would not find a barrier in the purpose of God, nor in your own impotency. Every lion would disappear as you sought your way tremblingly to the presence of Jesus, to His feet; and, oh! when received into the embrace of pardoning mercy, your soul should live, and live for ever!

THIRD DIVISION.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

SERMON XV.

CHRIST'S EASY YOKE.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."—MATT. XI. 30.

IT will be found very instructive to notice the connection in which these words are introduced by the Redeemer. He had denounced woe against Chorazin and Bethsaida. Most of His mighty works had been done in those cities; yet where we should have expected that most fruit would be brought forth, there was almost none. And so the Redeemer pronounced their doom, saying that in the great day they would be found guiltier than Tyre and Sidon, and even than Sodom, and that they should receive the greater condemnation. He had at the same time thanked His Father that it seemed good in His sight savingly to make known the mysteries of His kingdom unto babes, while they were hidden from the wise and prudent. Then, stretching out His arms of mercy, He invited all that labour and are heavy laden to come to Him for rest. These three things, then, are alike true: that men's destruction is of themselves, that their salvation is of God, and that Christ is a free Saviour to whom all are equally invited to come. We may find it hard—I should rather say impossible—in this world to understand the perfect harmony of the glorious sovereignty of Him who has mercy on whom He will have mercy with the absolute freeness of the gospel, and with our free agency and full accountability

for our reception of it. Yet each of these is a Bible truth; and it will be your wisdom to accept them as from the lips of God: it may be your preservation from many a fatal error to do so; it will be for your soul's salvation to submit yourself to their influence; that so a sense of the guilt of impenitence may work fitting fear in you, that the revelation of God's sovereignty may wean you from all trust in yourselves or in an arm of flesh, and that the exhibition of the grace of Christ may draw you to the Saviour.

The invitation given by Jesus in the blessed passage of which our text forms the conclusion is of three kinds: "Come unto me;" "Take my yoke upon you;" and "Learn of me." It does not seem to be material whether we regard these three, taken together, as bringing before us what we may call the complete act of faith—receiving Christ for the whole of salvation—or as holding forth faith with some of its attendants and fruits. But we may view the Redeemer in the first of these invitations as setting before us His attractiveness as a Priest, how His precious blood can cleanse sin away; in the second, his attractiveness as a King and a Master; and in the third, as a Prophet and Teacher; and thus meeting all the wants and necessities of the sinner seeking salvation, and all the felt exigencies of His people while in this world. But as if all this were not enough, there are promises and inducements held out to the children of men to attract them to Christ's service and induce them to comply with these gracious invitations. First, He gives rest; secondly, He is meek and lowly; thirdly, His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. He gives *rest*. In coming to Him as their Priest the burden of guilt first falls off, the dark clouds of wrath are dispelled. In coming to Him as their King and taking His yoke upon them, they find rest from the vanity of

seeking happiness in the world and in sin; and in coming to Him as their Prophet, they find rest from the darkness and ignorance of the natural state. The whole man finds rest. The conscience finds rest in His blood; the affections find rest in taking up His easy yoke; and the understanding finds rest in the certainty and excellency of the truths which He teaches. Then, He is "meek and lowly in heart." He does not despise to teach the poorest, the vilest, and the most ignorant; nor is He wearied by their stupidity; He is not disgusted (to speak it with reverence) by the brutish ignorance, the slowness of heart to believe and receive His truth, which they display. So He encourages the poor and the ignorant to come and learn of Him, adding, with all His majesty and authority, "And ye shall find rest to your souls." Finally, His very yoke is easy, His very burden is light. This is our special subject.

I. The meaning is not that Christ's yoke is carelessly or indifferently borne by His disciples; that it does not demand and call into exercise all the energies of their souls; or that they do not feel it to be a solemn and important and (were it in their own strength) a difficult thing. But it is meant that they feel it to be in its nature pleasant and delightful, and especially so as contrasted with the yoke of the world and of sin. Now, it may not be difficult to conceive of it in some of its aspects as being easy. It is pleasant to know or hope that one's sins are forgiven; it is pleasant to contemplate the Saviour's meekness, compassion, and lowliness. Yet how can that yoke be easy, an essential part of which is to deny ourselves, to take up the cross and follow Christ in the narrow way?

It is easy, in the first place, because it is *His* yoke. It is the yoke of Him who is our rightful Lord, who is infinitely worthy of the love of the whole heart and the services of the whole being, who has the claims of Redeemer

as well as Creator, who is holy, who is gracious, who is God all-sufficient, whom all the angels of God worship. It is His yoke of whom His forerunner, who knew His glory, said that he was not worthy to unloose His shoe-latchet; of whom another of His servants said that he esteemed His reproach, however much he might suffer in confessing His name, greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. If it be an honour to serve the best and highest of earthly kings, what an honour is it to serve Him who is King of kings, Lord of lords, and at the same time the Friend and Brother of His people! Secondly, it is the yoke of *liberty*. They who bear it are His redeemed ones, who have been delivered with a great deliverance. They have been blessed with freedom from the condemning sentence of the holy law which bound them over to eternal death; they have been blessed with freedom from the servitude of sin, which once they served till in the light of the cross they saw its evil and its vileness; with freedom from the tyranny of Satan, who once led them captive at his will; with freedom from the power of a present evil world, which once they worshipped till in the same light of the cross they discovered its vanity,[1] and, seeing the King in His beauty, learned to desire the better country. Christ's servants then are His freedmen; as bought with a price, they take His yoke upon them; so that the yoke is a sign of redemption. Thirdly, Christ's yoke is easy, because it is felt by His disciples to be a yoke of *love*. It consists much in the exercise of love to an unseen Saviour. They not only delight in the law of God after the inward man, but they feel themselves under the greatest and most endearing obligations to love Him who first loved them and gave Himself for them. The dying love of the Redeemer is the great motive to fidelity in His service;

[1] Gal. vi. 14.

"the love of Christ constraineth us." Further, it is the yoke of *begun conformity* to the mind that was in Christ Jesus—the lowly, meek, loving, self-sacrificing, self-consecrating mind that was in Christ Jesus. All its services are designed to bring about this result, to conform us the more to Christ. And there is a heavenly sweetness and peace in the exercise of these dispositions—in the very desire and thirst for them. Lastly, the Redeemer's yoke is easy because it is *in His own strength* that it is borne: for there is no real taking of His yoke upon us except in the strength of "the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Were Christ's people required to go in their own strength, were they commanded to grow in grace in their own strength, they would soon sink under the burden. But when He calls them to take up His yoke, He puts His Spirit within them; and He has left the promise of the Spirit, that in His light and strength they may follow Christ. And not only is provision thus made for the general purposes of the Christian life, but also for all its special purposes. There are very precious promises, faithful and sure, suited to every case and to every emergency in which they can be placed in this world. "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." As it is in the righteousness of Christ that the believer stands, and as every grace flows to him through His intercession, so it is his privilege that he may at all times have recourse to Him on the foundation of His finished work for grace to help in time of need.

But some one may say, How can this truth—that Christ's yoke is easy—consist with the Christian life being one of suffering and self-denial, with the gate to life being strait and the way narrow? It might be enough to answer, in the language of Paul, that "the sufferings of this

present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," and that the exercise of that hope by which believers are saved is more than sufficient to counterbalance any present suffering in the way. But more than this. There is no part of the suffering which is appointed for Christians in serving Christ in this world, which is not needful with a view to their present spiritual good and usefulness and to their eternal happiness. They are assured of this by their Lord, and they have some experience of it. Is it the conflict with sin which occasions (as we know from Paul's experience) acute suffering? The Christian is thus prepared more and more for estimating what a great thing salvation, a holy salvation, is. Or is it the conflict with his spiritual enemies? He thus makes increasing acquaintance with the sympathy of the great High Priest, who was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." Or is it the conflict with trial of other kinds? "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him," says Paul. If the believer lived up to his privileges, he would see special love in the most rugged steps of the journey.

But it may be said again, "Are not Christians often sad and gloomy? Do they not complain often of darkness and bondage?" True, Christians often bring trial upon themselves by their unfaithfulness, their inconsistency or their unbelief. They provoke God to chasten them; they bring darkness and bondage on their own spirits. And Christians have constant reason to mourn because of sin, and they are often distressed because of the sins of others. There are some whom they would take with them to heaven, but who will not listen to the invitation, "Come with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." But did you ever meet with a Christian who complained that he had too much of the fear of the Lord; too much love to Christ, or too much communion with

God? What is it that makes him sad? Is it not because of how little he realizes of these things, and how little of this heavenly fellowship he experiences? And is not this the best and most conclusive of all testimonies to the easiness of Christ's yoke and the lightness of His burden?

Yet one may still say, "I cannot understand how such a yoke should be easy if it includes spirituality of mind, self-denial, heavenly-mindedness, continual conflict with sin in the heart, watchfulness and prayer." Bethink yourself, my dear fellow-sinner! To what must we trace such an estimate of the Christian life? Is it not to that state of heart which calumniates the blessed God, and which says of the Redeemer that He is a hard Master? And oh! think not that I use too strong language when I say that *that* is the state of heart which reigns in hell!

II. Christ's yoke then *is* easy and His burden is light. Only remember that in order to any true experience of its pleasantness, two things are necessary—which indeed are implied in taking the yoke of Christ upon us. The first is, that our dependence for acceptance in the sight of God, and for all spiritual strength, be on Christ alone. So long as we place any dependence upon any fancied righteousness or strength of our own, and are unwilling to quit every such miserable ground of hope, we cannot have true rest. We have nothing of our own that can, when conscience is wakened up and enlightened by the truth, minister comfort or impart strength; and Christ will not make Himself known as the giver of rest till we give Him the place that is His due, simply depending upon *Him* for righteousness and strength. And, secondly, it is necessary that we really give Christ our hearts, and make not a formal but an unfeigned and unconditional surrender of ourselves to His guidance. There must be no halting between two opinions; we must cease from seeking to serve

God and mammon, the world and Christ; we must cease from seeking to reserve a corner of our hearts for some idol, some worldly pleasure, some lust. We must give Christ our hearts, and take Him to be our portion; and then our Saviour undertakes to make us happy, to satisfy and ravish our hearts with His own love. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him."[1]

Therefore, dear friends, what is our experience? Is our religion a task, a burden which in some, or many, of its observances we would shake off if we could? or is it the source of true peace and happiness to us? Is our service the service of slaves, or of freemen and children? No doubt there may be some enjoyment found in a religion of self-righteousness, in a religion the great end of which is to pacify conscience and to feed and pamper self; but this is not Christ's yoke, and this enjoyment is not the true rest. But supposing that we profess to have taken Christ's yoke upon us, knowing the implicit dependence upon Him and the entire devotedness to Him that are implied in it, then what is our experience? Do we find Christ a hard master, or have we experienced some true rest in His service? Do we love the word of Christ better than any other book, and the day of Christ better than any other day? Do we love Christ's house? Do we love His Person, though not as we would? And the more we are enabled to rely upon Him exclusively, and to devote ourselves to Him, to seek as our chief aim that He may be magnified, the more intensely we are engaged in His work, and the more we are energetically employed in seeking to have sin mortified, do we the more experience that His yoke is easy

[1] Ps. xlv. 10, 11.

and His burden is light? This is an evidence that we have proved His word, and know it experimentally to be true. O dear friends, supposing whatever we do in our religion to satisfy conscience were taken out of the way, what would remain? Would the kernel after all be there? or would it almost all disappear?

But let me not be misunderstood here. True discipleship is consistent with only broken rest in Christ, with the experience of only a scanty measure of rest in Christ, particularly on the part of the young or the tried disciple. One may say, "I do see things in a new light—how vain the world is, how great the soul and salvation are, how solemn eternity is; I do see that the great end of life is to find Christ and to follow Him; I do see a loveliness and excellency in the Saviour that make Him infinitely worthy of the trust and love of sinners; and I do desire to have Him as my Priest and Teacher and King. But I cannot say that I have attained to settled peace. Instead of this, I am troubled in a new way. I often fear that my sins are not forgiven." You are not to expect a peace that would leave you independent of coming afresh every day to the blood of Christ for cleansing. That would be false peace. It were well for you if you were never so satisfied with your coming and your faith as that you should give it Christ's place. Another may say, "I am very ignorant of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and slow of heart to understand. I never felt my ignorance as I do now." If this is because you have begun to come in contact with the great things of God, it is well: Christ can give you light. Christ can carry you on in the knowledge of Himself. "But I thought at one time that sin was dead in me, and that my heart would ever overflow with love to the Saviour; but now I find sin's power defiling all I do." Well, you must learn, under the guidance of the Captain of

salvation, to fight that good fight of faith which precedes the enjoyment of everlasting life. "But I am afraid I may betray the Master. I am exposed to many temptations; I have unworthy associates who do not know the Lord." Be more afraid of conformity to the world than of any temporal suffering. But Christ prays for His own: Christ can keep you unspotted from the world. Or you may say, "I have not the freedom in prayer which once I had; God is silent to me." Yet follow on. Seek His blessed face. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer."[1] Be not then discouraged; but follow on to know the Lord, and remember these great words, "The path of the just"—that is, of the humble disciple who feels himself a sinner and can do nothing without Jesus—"is like the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

What obligations are Christians laid under to commend the yoke of Christ to others by a consistent, humble, fruitful walk, by a suitable deportment under trial, by speaking well of His name—especially to the young, and by trying to win others to His service! O commend the precious Saviour, dear friends! Though some of us may be, and have reason to be, ashamed when we place ourselves side by side with some of the Bible worthies, or with some of the characters in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, yet surely every Christian would desire to add his Amen to the testimony which one of Bunyan's pilgrims gives for Christ when he is in the river of death: "This river has been a terror to many, yea the thoughts of it also have often frightened me. The waters, indeed, are to the palate bitter, and to the

[1] Isa. liv. 7, 8.

stomach cold; yet the thoughts of what I am going to, and of the conduct that waits for me on the other side, do lie as a glowing coal at my heart. I am now at the end of my journey; my toilsome days are ended. I am going now to see that head that was crowned with thorns, and that face that was spit upon for me. I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of; and wherever I have seen the print of His shoe in the earth, there I have coveted to set my foot too. His name has been to me sweeter than all perfumes. His voice to me has been most sweet, and His countenance I have more desired than they that have most desired the light of the sun. His word I did use to gather for my food, and for antidotes against my faintings. He has held me and has kept me from mine iniquity; yea, my steps hath he strengthened in his way."

With what deep earnestness and love ought we to seek to press the Saviour's invitation on our fellow-sinners who are yet without rest, because without Christ;—on the afflicted and distressed; on those who are living for a present world; on those burdened with sin; on the aged; but especially upon the young. If it be true that there is no rest except in Christ, no security against falling into the world's snares and a thousand temptations except by being in His fold; if one's usefulness in this world much turns upon an early dedication to the Saviour; if no one ever repented of coming in youth to Christ, but thousands —brought late in life to repentance—have wept over and bewailed lost youth and manhood; above all, if life is uncertain, and if that judgment day of which Christ speaks in this chapter is sure to come, should not the Saviour's invitation sink into every heart here? Should it not sink into your heart, my dear young hearer, so that you shall not give it merely a passing thought, but resolve in the strength of almighty grace to comply with it, and to make

thorough earnest work of coming to the Saviour, as that on which your present peace and eternal salvation turns? The Lord grant it, for Christ's sake!

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon my breast.'
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting-place,
And He has made me glad."

SERMON XVI.

"LOVEST THOU ME?"

"So, when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."—JOHN XXI. 15-17 (see also MARK XIV. 26-31, 66-72).

As it was for the church that Christ lived and died, so it was for her that He rose again. He left His Father's throne of glory and came into a far country, that He might earn and purchase her redemption and deliverance. His love for her was such that the waters of many temptations and the floods of affliction and of His Father's wrath could not quench it. For the joy that was set before Him in her complete deliverance He endured the cross; for her He became obedient even unto death; and in all His humiliation the prospect in the distance of this beauteous and ransomed bride rejoiced His spirit, and carried Him exultingly through. As He died for her offences, so He rose again for her justification. If He is now at the right hand of the Father, it is that He may make intercession for her. If He has all power in heaven and on earth, it is that He

may give eternal life to her for whom He laid down His life. And as the severest pang of His sufferings could not prevail to make Him think the purchase too dear, so He rejoiced in their completion mainly because His church's deliverance was effected.

If we would see into the heart of Christ, let us contemplate Him on the day of His resurrection. He had burst the prison gates and come forth a conqueror; He stood the head of a redeemed world; He had spoiled principalities and powers; a name above every name awaited Him; the hosts of heaven longed for His ascension that they might fall down and worship Him;—and how was He employed? Behold Him first ministering consolation to a poor mourning disciple—Mary Magdalene. See Him next enlightening the ignorance and confirming the weak faith of the two travellers to Emmaus—conversing with them till their hearts burned within them. Then we find Him appearing to Cephas; he who had denied Him was singled out for this gracious visit, as specially needing it to assure him that he was graven on Christ's heart still. Afterwards He appeared to His assembled disciples, and despite of their ignorance and slowness of heart to believe, despite of their desertion of Him in His hour of agony and distress, saluted them with "Peace be unto you." We have here the heart of Christ disclosed to us, His love and pity for His people, His zeal for their interests, His fixed purpose of saving them, and His determination that none of them should perish, and that none should pluck them out of His hand. And Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

But let us attend to the passage immediately before us. And if we could enter into its meaning, we should see something of Christ's heart, and something of our own. We see here the great Shepherd of the sheep dealing with

a strayed sheep—but one of Christ's sheep, and therefore reclaimed,—one who would doubtless long ere now have been devoured by the wolves had not He watched over and protected him. Peter was a chosen vessel; and therefore in confirming him Jesus would so stamp his backsliding and his recovery on his heart, and so deal with him, as that the church at large should be profited.

The case of Peter is sometimes coarsely handled. Many deal with the sad scene of his denial of Christ as though he were placed on the pillory to be branded as a traitor and coward by every passer-by. But when they scan and censure Peter's fall it would be well if they inquired whether their own lives be not one continued denial of Christ; whether their hearts ever dictated Peter's question and confession, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life;" whether they have ever shared Peter's blessing, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven;" and whether, if they can see the greatness of his sin, they can also enter into the pungency of his sorrow over it. Not that we would dare to speak lightly of Peter's sin; but it is dangerous to contemplate the falls and infirmities of the saints of God without respect to their life of faith and obedience, and especially to the deep repentance consequent on their reclaiming and their experience of mercy;—to probe into their sins and faults, while our own hearts' corruptions remain unexplored by us. We are then in danger of extracting poison from such a precious passage of God's Word as this, if we are content to bring to its consideration a hard unhumbled heart.

"Though all shall be offended, yet will not I." So spoke Peter, not in hypocrisy—knowing that he loved Christ—but not thinking of his weakness, and not laying to heart

the deceitfulness of sin and the wiles and power of Satan. He spoke as confidently as though he had been his own keeper; and not only so, but he affirmed that in the silence or flight of all other confessors of Christ's name, he would be found faithful. It was no wonder that his foot slipped. And so will it ever be with us. When we lose sight of the deceitfulness of our hearts, we lose sight of a necessary beacon, and we are left to steer our way in darkness amid shoals and quicksands; and the result may be a departure from the faith, a lukewarmness of spirit, or a loose and careless walk before the world, by which enemies are led to blaspheme, the people of God are wounded, and we pierce ourselves through with many sorrows. This is a mystery to those who have but a form of godliness; but it is not so to those who know the deceitfulness of their hearts, and that they have daily to contend with the many-headed monster sin, and need restraining and upholding grace to enable them to stand before it. And how did Peter act when he ceased to say "Lord, preserve me"? In the face of Christ's solemn and pointed warning, in the face of his boast and of his expressed resolution, he denied his Master: "I know not the man." He thrice denied Him. He added cursing to his denial, as if his conscience had not been already sufficiently loaded with guilt. How affecting in one of that little band whom Christ had chosen out of the world, and to whom He had unlocked and disclosed His very heart! How affecting in one who was not a traitor at heart!—that such wickedness should lodge in the breast of a *disciple!* How humiliating to all of us that such is the requital which Christ receives from the best of us! And how strikingly does it illustrate the truth that the love of Christ is free, rich, and altogether unmerited!

"The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter." Oh! surely

He had prepared Himself for such a requital, and though it met Him in the very thickest of His sufferings, He was not overcome by it; it was insufficient to change His love. He would even then show how His heart rose above it all; and as on the cross He gathered in one unlikely sinner to His fold, so in the hall of judgment he recovered his wandering disciple. "He looked upon Peter." Who can tell the significance and power of that look! It went like an arrow to Peter's heart, and "he went out and wept bitterly."

Without attempting to analyse his feelings in the freshness of his sorrow, let us view him some little time after, under the searching scrutiny of Him whom he had denied. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" It is as if the Lord had said, "Thou knowest the great professions of love made by thee, and how these were followed up by denying me; sayest thou still, not only that thou lovest me, but that thy love exceeds in measure that of thy brethren?"

"Peter saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." It is no longer self-confident boasting Peter, but humbled broken-hearted Peter who speaks. He had learned a lesson of humility. He had learned the deceitfulness of his heart. The exceeding sinfulness of his sin was present to his mind, so that he blushed in remembering his woful pride and presumption, and instead of thinking he stood foremost in faith and love, he now deemed himself unworthy to be called a disciple, feeling that if again permitted to call Christ "Lord and Master," it would be a miracle of mercy. Yet still he felt that he loved Him; that Christ was dearer to him than all besides; that without Him this world would be to him a blank and void. He knew that he harboured no known rebel to his Lord in his heart; and if such an

Achan lurked unsuspected there, it was his desire that Christ should drag it forth and slay it before him. He knew also that he had sorrowed for his sin as he had never sorrowed for any earthly losses or trials: and in the view of this, he was able to look Christ in the face and to say, "Lord, *thou knowest* that I love thee." He appealed to the Searcher of Hearts, and left it with Him to say if it were not so.

In this reply we may see also the workings of the Spirit of adoption. He felt how grievously he had sinned; that having renounced Christ, most justly might he be be renounced by Him; yet this did not drive him away, nor make him seek to evade Christ's question; it led him to throw himself into the arms of the Lord Jesus, in the self-same spirit with that which led David to say, "Let me fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great." "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I *love* thee." Happy Peter! that could thus appeal to the omniscient Redeemer that He was his *Beloved.*

"Jesus saith unto him, Feed my lambs." The great Shepherd in these words seals Peter's forgiveness. Only let us remember that it was to reconciled and penitent Peter these words were spoken. There is no such thing as the enjoyment of pardon separated from repentance. But though Peter's fall had not blotted his name out of the book of life, had it not annulled his apostleship? No; Jesus saith unto him, "Feed my lambs."

"*My lambs.*" How endearing is this expression! And from the mouth, too, of the holy Lamb of God! Here are embodied all the tenderness and affection of which the poverty of language will admit. But who are Christ's lambs? Not the unconverted young (though they may be within the outward fold of the church, and have Christ's name put upon them), if they are still unconverted; though

it is out of the families of His people that the Lord specially gathers souls to Himself, and though churches, ministers, and parents are charged with very solemn responsibility to watch over the young, and to commend the service of the loving Saviour to them. And not those who have made the profession for the first time that they are the Lord's, if the profession be not a true one; if they have never been awakened to feel that one thing is needful, never fled to Christ for refuge, and never turned away from the world to rest in Christ as their portion. But they are young or recent converts. Especially they include dear young Christians, pious youth or children who have just entered in at the strait gate and begun to make acquaintance with the realities and glories of the spiritual world. They include those who, after learning in a more or less painful measure how sinful and lost they are, have begun to hope in believing that Jesus is able and willing to save them to the uttermost; who have seen so much of Christ in the Word as to make Him the Alpha and Omega of their desires and hopes and aims—to be His, to follow Him, to love Him, to serve Him; but whose wounds, the wounds produced by a sense of sin, have not been thoroughly healed, or are ready, if rudely touched, to bleed afresh. They include those who, though they may have little to tell of their experience, and though they may be very ignorant of many important truths, have yet got the heart right with God, the heart that loves His name and law, and day and word, and church and people. They include those who, having tasted of the graciousness of the Lord, and having no heart to engage in any duty without a sense of His supporting presence, are ready to conclude that all is gone if their Beloved withdraw for a moment; who have yet to learn to stretch the wings of faith, and to pierce through every intervening cloud to an unseen abid-

ing Christ. They are those who are equally inexperienced in the workings of their own hearts and the difficulties of the Christian life, and are therefore liable to be at once prostrated by temptation, or to fall a prey to the wily insinuations of the hireling. They are those in whom the lineaments of the blessed Saviour's image are like those of an infant, where there is much to excite love and pity, and much also that calls for wise, judicious, and tender management. Such are Christ's lambs. They are dear to Him; and He has provided that they be fed with food convenient for them. The good of the Church requires it; for if the lambs perish, the Church's hope is lost. He has provided green pastures for them, and He has commanded His servants to see to it that they feed them diligently and tenderly. Only those who love Him, and have been called by His grace, are employed and sanctioned by Him in this work. None but converted souls can understand the case of converts. And this is the chief proof of love which He desires from His servants, that they lay themselves out to win souls, and when they are won, tenderly to care for and feed them. Woe then to the hireling shepherd who scatters the lambs! And ill shall it fair even with the ignorant, though honest, shepherd who drives when he should lead them, who gives them strong meat instead of milk, or who quiets their fears by teaching them self-confidence.

Does it seem strange, then, that to fiery impetuous Peter such a charge should be given? Our wonder will cease if we consider the effects on Peter of his knowledge of himself and his experience of the Lord's grace. He had grown in humility and in self-distrust. His conscience, purged from sin, was tender. His spiritual senses were sharpened to see sin where others might fail to see it. He had learned the devices of Satan, and the deceitfulness of his own heart. He was filled with shame in thinking of his

sin, so that he felt ere he could administer reproof to others, that he needed to administer it afresh and unsparingly to himself. His experience of mercy had softened and subdued him, and filled his heart with patience and gentleness. None more ready to bear a brother's burden, more slow to condemn, more at home in dealing with the broken heart, than those who feel how much Christ has forgiven them.

Peter therefore had a heart for the work of feeding Christ's lambs, and peculiar aptitude for it. Did he meet one of them mourning under the complaint that the Lord had clean forgotten him? Peter would tell him to "trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself on his God:—Can a woman forget her child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? She may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Did he see another leaning wistfully over the hedge of the green pastures towards the forbidden paths of worldly pleasures? Peter would run to snatch him from the danger. Did he see another sporting himself in the vain imagination that he had become wiser than his teachers? Peter would bid him stand in the good old paths, and attend to wholesome instruction. Did he see another take his determined stand in one corner of the field of truth to the exclusion of the rest? Peter would warn him that he was engendering spiritual disease, and already gave signs of a distempered appetite. And did another meet him with the piteous complaint that iniquities prevailed against him, that his prayers were so worthless, his heart so untamed and unkept, his affections so fickle, his love so cold, that it seemed to him as if he did but beat the air? Peter would direct his eyes to Him who "will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax," and pointing to the cross and righteousness and intercession of Christ, bid him plant his foot there,

and feel a security which all pollution and all guilt could not overcome, and be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." And did yet another meet him with the still more mournful complaint that he had sinned beyond the reach of mercy? Peter would say, *I* obtained mercy; and in me behold a pattern of God's long-suffering, and learn not to limit that worth and that grace which are infinite.

"He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" It is as if He had said, Is it not a solemn question that I ask thee? How few are there who even profess to love Me! And of those few how many do but feign it, or deceive themselves with the thought that they love me, while, if they could but snatch forgiveness from me, they care not for my name or honour. Consider also, is love, fervent, steadfast love, the love befitting an apostle and shepherd, consistent with denying me? Ponder this well, Peter. Not that Jesus would have Peter *doubt* the truth of his love; but assuredly He desired that for Peter's good and usefulness there should be yet more searching of heart. And let us take the question home to ourselves. Are there any of us, professing to love Christ, who shrink from truly confessing Him before men? Can we recall a season when we acted as though we were ashamed of His gospel, His ways, His people; or, if we did confess Him, made the confession of Him easy to flesh and blood by making it in the spirit of wrath and vain boasting? Then let us inquire whether this be consistent with unfeigned love to Him. If we find that it is consistent with some poor measure of love, we shall certainly find also that we do not love as we ought.

"He saith unto him, Feed my sheep." Jesus renews the charge, only He makes it more extensive: Feed my flock —the lambs and the sheep. Thus would I have you evince your love for me. Warn and caution them lest

they fall after thy example. Thou art now converted, strengthen thy brethren.

" He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me ?" Christ would have Peter to remember, ever to remember, the wondrous mercy he had experienced in being restored and forgiven, that there might be, as it were, a pillar set up here to which he might look back at every succeeding step of his journey; and we cannot doubt that where he now is, before the throne of God, he often looks back to this period, and from its review gathers fresh impulse to join in the song, " To Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood."

" Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me ?" He felt that he deserved to be distrusted. How vividly was the night of his denial present to his mind ! If we go astray from Christ, we may expect our love to be mistrusted. Our own consciences will mistrust us; the Word of God in every page will lead us to mistrust ourselves. But can we say with Peter, " Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee ?" Thou knowest all our sins and our follies; Thou knowest there is that in us which would humble us to hell; Thou knowest that every duty is defiled with our sins, yea, that we are altogether vile;—but Thou knowest also that they are our grief and our shame; we groan and are burdened under our corruptions; for we *would* love Thee with pure hearts fervently. Oh, increase this spark of love ! Send down from heaven that fire which would kindle our hearts into a whole burnt-offering ! Oh hasten the time when, through Thine unbounded mercy, there shall not be found in us one cold thought of Thee any more.

" Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep." Is it so ? Then, feed my sheep:—thus may you find full expression for

your devoted attachment to me; and "inasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye do it unto me." "Feed my sheep:"—guide them to the pastures of my Word, defend them from the ravening wolves; take the oversight of them; and when I, the chief Shepherd, shall appear, thou, Peter, shalt receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

This subject speaks particularly to ministers; but it speaks also to every individual.

We have here disclosed to us the heart of Christ, of the meek and lowly yet jealous Lamb of God. He who searches the heart now says to each one of us, "Lovest thou me?" Do we love Him? It is a bad sign if we seek to evade the question. Does our closet with its omitted duties, does our heart with its indulged lusts, answer in the negative? Or do we rather, under a deep impression of the deceitfulness of our hearts, do we say in the first instance, Lord, search and try us? So far it is well. Let us then take the question home with us, and there lay bare our souls to the scrutiny of the Word, which is Christ's instrument in searching the heart. If you love the Redeemer, you may expect that He will shine upon His own work, make it known to you, and give you a blessed interview in realizing it. If you love Him not, better, surely, to awaken to this consciousness now than to have the mask pulled off at a judgment-seat.

There are many whom I need not ask whether they love Christ. Their disregard of His law, their indifference to prayer and to communion with Him show that there is no love to Christ in their hearts. Remember that there is another word written, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha,"—that is, Let him be accursed till the day of judgment; let the curse of God abide on him for ever. If he love not Christ,

let the whole creation say, " Anathema Maranatha." Can any of us be indifferent to such a sentence as this ? O may God take away the heart of stone !

From a mercy-seat Christ now addresses each one of you, " Lovest thou Me ?"—Me, who am fairer than the sons of men, who am the brightness of my Father's glory and the express image of His person, who laid down my life that sinners such as you might have eternal life, who for years have been standing knocking at the door of your hearts. You cannot indeed reason yourself into loving Christ, infinitely amiable and worthy of love though He be. Neither are you to keep back from Him whom you have rejected and pierced, till you find your heart going out in love to Him ; for then you would never come to Him. But as a lost sheep you are to come to Him as the Shepherd of souls that He may restore and renew you. Under His own Spirit's teaching you are to believe His wondrous love to sinners such as you and me ; and that love, when realized and brought home, will conquer, melt, and draw you.

SERMON XVII.

"ABIDE IN ME."

"Abide in me, and I in you."—JOHN xv. 4.

THESE words were first addressed by Christ to the eleven, who were "in Him" not by profession only but in reality, and to whom He had a little before spoken such words as these: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."[1] "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also."[2] "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid;"[3] and of whom He had just said (Judas having previously left them), "Now are ye clean, through the word that I have spoken unto you."

He makes use of the simile of the vine-stock and the branches to illustrate the union that subsists between Him and His people. The vine-stock and the branches make up one tree;—Christ and His people are one. Plainly this is no mere external union, neither is it a mere union of sentiment or feeling (for, in this sense, the holy angels are entirely one with Christ). Nor yet is it what we call

[1] John xiv. 1. [2] John xiv. 18, 19. [3] John xiv. 27.

a relative union, such as subsists between the Representative and those whom He represents, or between the Surety and those for whom He engages. This is necessarily included in it; but it is more than all this. The leading thought is the sameness of life. As the same life subsists in the vine-stock and in the branches, so it is the same life which in its surpassing glory and all-fulness is in the God-man the Mediator that is also in the weakest believer. It is the same Spirit, poured out upon the Head and received by Him without measure, that in measure is given to His people, first to quicken them and then to dwell in them. And this is peculiar to redemption; as truly peculiar to it as is Incarnation, and as is Substitution. It is very true that holiness is the same in the holy angels that it is in Christians; as indeed it is the same in essence in God and in His holy creatures. But the peculiarity of the life of Christ's people lies in this, that the God-man is its spring; and that it is His life-giving power that evokes it out of death, that preserves it, and that causes it to grow from grace to glory. Hence arises a peculiarly close dependence of Christ's people upon Christ, just in proportion to the intimacy of the union. And hence also their blessed security in having their life bound up in His life: because He lives, they shall live also. For this union is an indissoluble one. Once formed, it lasts for ever: death cannot break it; on the resurrection-day it will be perfected. No doubt Christ speaks of certain branches in Him being taken away, cast forth and withered. But these are branches that by bearing no fruit unto perfection show that they are not truly united to the Vine, and do not partake of its life and fatness: the mysterious union on which salvation turns has never been made up between them and the Saviour, through His Spirit quickening them and their coming to Him for life. We must be living

souls, living branches in the living Vine, in order that the union may be indissoluble.

And it is not enough to be in Christ; we must abide in Christ. As it is not enough for a *sinner* to know that Jesus is the common Saviour, or to know that all whom the Father hath given Him shall come to Him; as his knowledge of these things will but increase his condemnation unless he comes to Christ for salvation; so neither is it enough for the *believer* to know that nothing shall separate him from the love of Christ. For, if it be a blessed truth that the love of Christ is unchangeable, it is just as sure that those who are interested in it "work out their own salvation," and do not "draw back to perdition." All care and anxiety about the soul does not leave a man, once through grace he is in Christ. The fear of the wrath to come should indeed be removed by faith in the blood of atonement; but there must be the same care to continue in Christ that there was to find Christ. And no comfort can be drawn from the unchangeablenes of His love unless we are thus striving to "abide in Him." Our first care must be to attain to a state of salvation through union to Christ; our continued care must be to have our salvation advancing and the spiritual life in us increased through daily experience of the power of Christ as the Life.

So then the sum of the Christian's duty may be said to be comprehended in this—abiding in Christ. Jesus, in addressing His people, filled with concern for their comfort, their stability, their growth, and their fruitfulness, says, "*Abide in me.*" Can we, from experimental knowledge and blessed remembrance, understand the feelings of the soul that after long seeking rest and finding none has now found Christ, and so can say, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee?" Oh how deep the sense of personal unworthiness then!

how vivid the impression of the Saviour's glory and preciousness!—Christ as a covert, Christ as the life, Christ as the soul's all! Now think of these words as coming from *His* lips to the sinner who has been just received by Him and who is tasting of His graciousness. Oh who would say that the soul would ever again be found departing from Him?

What is implied then in abiding in Christ?

1. There must be a deep continued sense of need of Christ, and an abiding perception of His all-sufficiency and fulness as a Saviour. The poverty of spirit to which the blessing is attached by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount[1] is characteristic of the Christian not at the outset of his course only, but while he is in this world. It will leave him at death, when sin will leave him. Then he will be perfected in humility, and perfectly blessed in the enjoyment of Christ; but he will be no longer poor in spirit. Till then, he will be growing in this grace. The richer in grace the poorer will he be in spirit, because he will be increasingly humble, because there will be increasing sensibility to sin, and a more and more enlarged apprehension of how much he has to attain. And thus, as he grows in grace, he will more and more need the same Saviour who received him at first, when he came in his guilt and his rags and his misery, and who showed him mercy. But along with a sense of need of Christ, there must be a continued and growing perception of the suitableness and fulness of Christ, through a spiritual understanding of the record concerning Him. Without this the Christian, with his deep exercise, would be of all men the most miserable. The blessedness of the poor in spirit lies in this, that theirs is the kingdom of heaven to enrich and ennoble them; and the blessedness of the Christian growing in poverty of spirit lies in this,

[1] Matt. v. 3.

that Christ is his to be more and more known by him in His unsearchable riches. It is under this sense of need on the one hand, and this persuasion of the Saviour's all-sufficiency on the other, that a sinner is first drawn to Him; it is under a deepening sense of need—the feeling that without Christ he can do nothing, and a growing knowledge of His preciousness, that the believer abides in Him. We cannot be too jealous of the religion that dispenses with poverty of spirit, or that manifests itself in calm confidence and high assurance while having quitted the humbling work of mourning for sin and of growing in a sense of its evil. If we think we have learned enough about sin and our own sinfulness, and if we do not care to grow also in the knowledge of Christ, we may take it as a sign that we are strangers to fellowship with the Saviour.

2. Abiding in Christ must imply *dependence* upon Him, or *trust* in Him,—trust, namely, for all that is needed to maintain and perfect the spiritual life, or to secure the soul's peace, growth in grace, and eternal salvation. It implies dependence upon Him for righteousness. The soul must abide in Him as the strong tower out of which it cannot be safe; or, to use another of the precious Scripture metaphors, it must put on Christ for justification continually on every fresh approach to God, and after every approach, to have the iniquity of holy things taken away. The more the Christian grows in grace, the more simple will be his dependence on Christ for righteousness, the more afraid will he be of mixing anything else—anything even of what the Holy Spirit may have wrought in him—as a ground of hope before God, with the righteousness of Immanuel. Then it implies dependence upon Christ for teaching, to open up the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and to show us the path in which He would have us to go. It implies, moreover, dependence upon Him for

sanctifying grace, as having no hope of obtaining holiness except through the grace of His almighty Spirit. Thus abiding in Christ is the exercise of active dependence upon Him; such dependence as evidences itself in the peace, the hope, the strength which flow from Christ to the soul through its exercise. This certainly is one of the main things implied in living a life of faith on the Son of God.

3. To abide in Christ is to continue in Christ's *love*. It does not much matter whether we say, abiding in the contemplation of Christ's love, or abiding in the exercise of love to Christ and love to the brethren; for it is in contemplating Christ's love that love to Christ is drawn forth and exercised; and it is under its blessed influence that His people are constrained to "live not unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again." "Abide," saith Christ, "in me." If in coming to Me your hard hearts have been broken, if you love Me who first loved you, if under the influence of this love you inquire, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits unto me?" then continue in my love, that you may keep my commandments.

4. To abide in Christ is to *adhere* to the Redeemer—to His Person (that is, to Himself, the living Saviour), and therefore to His word, His cause, His people—under all temptations to depart from Him. No sooner does one set his face Christ-ward, than he meets with trials of a new and peculiar nature; and no sooner has he come to Christ, than he may encounter temptations to go away from Him. It may be false doctrine, another gospel, tempting him as the primitive churches—especially those of Galatia—were tempted, to depart from the simplicity that is in Christ, and to seek, after having begun in the Spirit, to be made perfect by the flesh. When thus tried, the soul that is

kept by Christ will say, "To whom can I go but unto Thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life." There is a blessed heart-assurance of the Divinity and infallible certainty of the way of salvation in Jesus that accompanies the first exercise of faith; and because of this, the soul that has tasted that the Lord is gracious, will seek, not another gospel, but a fresh view and taste of the same gospel of the grace of God. Another of these temptations is to sloth on the one hand, and to legalism on the other. One who has been zealous and hot in God's service may wax cold and lifeless, contented to pray without any real pressing after communion with God, and to read and hear the word without any experience in the conscience and affections of its searching and cleansing power. Surely he has then ceased to abide in Christ. Or he may fall for the time under the power of legalism,—that is to say, of self-righteousness,—one of the most subtle and powerful enemies with which the believer has to contend. Could he but receive in simple faith the promises of free grace in Christ, and trust in the Lord for their fulfilment, how different, many a time, would it be with his soul in light, comfort, and growth! But why is it difficult, at any time, to exercise this simple faith? Mainly, because of the remaining legalism of the heart. Worldliness is another powerful temptation,—that is to say, conformity to the world, or the love of a present world. Some of God's people have fallen under this temptation, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. The seed sown among thorns had sprung up, and there was every promise of abundant fruit; but "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in choked the word, and it became unfruitful."[1] If you would abide in Christ, you must feel your need of Christ's

[1] Mark iv. 19; Luke viii. 14.

almighty grace to keep you whilst engaged in the world's engrossing business, that your heart may still be where Christ is. Spiritual pride is another of these temptations. When the great apostle was caught up to the third heaven, we might say, How humble will Paul be, in the experience of such grace! Yet, lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to him a thorn in the flesh.[1] And if Paul needed this discipline in order that he might be kept humble and abiding in Christ, what Christian is not in danger of spiritual pride, especially after any unwonted experience of the Lord's goodness? And may it not be that the reason why some Christians have so little settled comfort and joy is that they are so ready to put their enlargements in the room of Christ. "Abide," He saith, "in *me*." The only other of the manifold temptations to depart from Christ which we shall now mention—for such we must consider it—is despondency or readiness to faint, especially in time of trial. Despondency is no friend to humility; though some of God's dear children are often visited with it, and kept low under its influence, saying, "My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God." But He says, "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength."[2]

5. To abide in Christ must include in it to abide in Him *to the end*, even when the flesh may seek repose, and when something may whisper that there has been enough of confession of old sins, and struggling enough with indwelling sin. To the end,—till the soul can "go no more

[1] 2 Cor. xii. [2] Is. xl. 28, 29.

out," till it be made white in His blood, and be filled with all the fulness of God, finding its heaven in giving back all that it has received, in adoring thanksgiving to the Lamb that was slain.

The Redeemer tells us what the happy effects are of abiding in Him. They are such as these:—First, The bringing forth of much fruit, even that fruit by which the Father is glorified, and which is the evidence of discipleship;[1] secondly, the knowledge of God as the hearer of prayer, because in keeping close to Christ prayer flourishes, and the believer not having a condemning heart, has confidence towards God to open his mouth wide that the Lord may fill it;[2] and, thirdly, that his joy is made full, so that he finds, even when sorrowful, that he may be "always rejoicing."[3]

But let us not forget that Christ speaks of some who do not abide in Him; and that their misery is proportioned to the joy of those who do. How terrible are His words! "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."[4] How sad the case of a person who once seemed to be in Christ, a believer in His name, an ardent lover of His Person, His people and His cause, a student of His Word, an honourer of His laws,—when he leaves his first love, nay, goes back to the world and is again entangled in its pollutions! Are there any such among us? If there be one, may the Lord, in infinite mercy, ere it be too late, so deal with him as that, out of a deeply wounded heart, the cry may come forth, "O that it were with me as in the years that are past!"

Is there one who fears that he has lost, or all but lost,

[1] John xv. 5-8.
[2] John xv. 7, 16; 1 John iii. 20-22.
[3] John xvi. 24; xvii. 13.
[4] John xv. 6.

the evidence which he once had of being in Christ, because the faith, repentance, love, self-denial, or what he once thought to be the beginnings of these blessed graces in his soul, cannot now be discerned by him? What is the remedy for such a case? Is it to brood over old experiences, or to look more and more *within?* The Lord *may* give deliverance in this way. But what you are especially called to, if you now feel that to be without Christ is the sum of all misery, is to come as a sinner, as the chief of sinners, to the Lord Jesus. If you cannot say with confidence that you are in Christ, yet you *may* say that He invites you to come to Him, with the promise that He will in no wise cast you out. Apprehend the grace of so blessed an invitation, delay not compliance with it, come to Christ; and the rising of the Sun of Righteousness upon your soul will scatter the darkness; in His light you shall see light, and peace and joy will return with a melted heart. But inquire at the same time, if it be so that you have all but lost the evidence you once had of being in Christ, when was it that doubt began to fill your mind? Was it after you were less earnest and diligent in secret prayer, after you had given place to spiritual sloth, and after the word of Christ had ceased to be continually searched by you and to dwell in you? Then understand and profit by the solemn lesson which this teaches you. It is in connection with self-examination, with prayer, with making His own Word precious, that the Lord Jesus manifests Himself to His people, keeps them abiding in Himself, and restores them from their wanderings.

Finally, how sad is the case of those to whom it cannot be said, "Abide in me," because they are not in Christ! With whatever unconcern it may be listened to, to be without Christ is a dreadful thing. It is to be under the curse of God and the dominion of sin, to be living to God's

dishonour, to be walking in the broad way that leadeth to destruction. But if Christ seeks you when you seek Him not; if there is mercy enough in Christ for you, efficacy in His blood to cleanse you, and power in His grace to sanctify you, then think how fearful it would be to live and die a rejecter of this Christ, to appear before the judgment-seat without Christ, to be driven from Christ's presence, to have it said by the blessed Saviour Himself, "Depart from me!" These are not unmeaning words. You will yet know that these are the things which concern your peace. Will you not, then, seek the Lord while He is to be found, while you are not on the bed of pain, while you possess your reason, while you still have precious Sabbath time, while Jesus still knocks at your door?

SERMON XVIII.

GOD DWELLING WITH THE CONTRITE.[1]

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."—ISA. lvii. 15.

SOME parts of God's creation declare, more strikingly than do others, His "eternal power and Godhead." And so some passages of the Word, with peculiar force and solemnity, impress our minds with their divinity. Surely this is one of them. Often too in the Bible we meet with such encouraging and reviving views of the Divine character as this, just after exhibitions of God's hatred of sin and of His judgments on account of it. Such is the connection of our text with the preceding part of the chapter. Let us meditate for a little on these great words. The Lord himself be our Light and Guide!

"*Thus saith the high and lofty One.*"

God is infinitely exalted above the highest creatures. They are of yesterday, finite in their nature and in their excellence; He is the self-existent, all-sufficient, and independent One, possessing all possible perfection in infinite measure. He is the Creator; they are the work of His hands. "All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity."

[1] Preached before Communion.

He is the fountain of being and of blessedness, in whom all His creatures "live and move and have their being," and to whose self-moving goodness and power they owe, every moment, everything they enjoy. His glory shines forth in His works; but that glory is unsearchable. He is "the high and lofty One," "exalted above all blessing and praise;"[1] the goodness of His creatures extends not to Him;[2] it is their highest privilege and their sacred duty to celebrate His praises; but they cannot add to His glory. He is not only exalted above all praise, but above the highest thoughts of the highest of His creatures—I AM THAT I AM; "the King eternal, immortal, invisible; the only wise God, dwelling in the light that no man can approach unto." It will be the blessedness of holy beings to be growing in the knowledge of God in the ages to come; yet they can never comprehend but in part what God is. What reverence and humility become *us* then in His presence! How can an unholy creature ever lie low enough before God! How can there be one right thought of God without reverence for His name, and without a sense of our nothingness as creatures, and of our vileness as sinners?

"*He inhabiteth eternity.*"

This is the glory of His being. It is not only that His years shall never fail, His existence have no end; for *that* is true of His rational creatures, and even we can form some conception of a future never-ending state of being, though our minds soon faint and weary when we think fixedly of a heaven without end, still more of a hell without end; but it is that He is from everlasting, without beginning of days. How utterly overwhelmed are we when we think of a past eternity! How soon do we discover the littleness of our capacities, when we try to comprehend the being of the

[1] Neh. ix. 5. [2] Ps. xvi. 2.

infinite One! Let us carry our thoughts back as far as we can to the ages that are past, we are as far as ever from one right apprehension of past eternity. And yet our reason tells us that Jehovah, the self-existent One, must be from everlasting. And all His perfections are vitally connected with the eternity of His being—more especially His omnipresence, His omniscience, His omnipotence, and His unchangeableness. His eternity is very often exhibited in Scripture as a ground of strong and unspeakable consolation. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them."[1] "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."[2] "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding."[3]

"*Whose name is holy.*"

When the prophet, in vision, saw "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."[4] God is holy—possessing all moral excellency in infinite measure. Under the Lord's own teaching, we can form some right view of

[1] Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27.
[2] Ps. xc. 1, 2.
[3] Isa. xl. 28.
[4] Isa. vi. 1-3.

His holiness, and speak of it not unbefittingly, in its opposition to sin; but what more is to be understood and learned of it, considered in itself as the peculiar excellence of God, can be better felt than described. He is *the* Holy One; infinitely worthy of the fear and love and homage and service of all His rational creatures, and able to make them perfectly blessed in being holy, and in the adoring contemplation of *His* holiness. He is "light," and He is "love." Therefore he is infinitely and irreconcilably opposed to sin and all moral evil. Evil shall not dwell with Him. It is His glory that He cannot lie, and cannot do anything inconsistent with perfect rectitude and goodness. He is perfect in His attributes, government, and ways; holy in His law, His gospel, and His people. And for this He is unceasingly adored, and thanks are given at the remembrance of His holiness.

"*I dwell in the high and holy place.*"

He is present in every place, and throughout His entire universe there are evidences of His being and His rule; but He especially manifests himself for the contemplation and enjoyment of holy beings in the high and holy place. Heaven is a locality, as is hell; though it is a truth of vast importance that it is the state of the heart that makes heaven to be a place of blessedness to its inhabitants, as it is the state of the heart that makes hell to be such a place of torment to the lost. Heaven is a high and holy place; a fitting palace for the great King, prepared by Him before the foundation of the world, and furnished with all that is needed to secure the complete and uninterrupted blessedness of His children. It is a holy place filled with holy beings, and nothing that defileth can enter it. There are many there who were once unholy; but they have been washed and sanctified and justified, and are now perfectly like Christ—light and love.

The Lord dwells there.

In the high and holy place He displays His glory, in a way we cannot understand, for the adoring perception of His creatures. When Moses, favoured above all Old Testament saints in the nearness to God which he obtained, offered up the prayer, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory," supplicating such a spiritual apprehension of the Divine excellencies as he had not yet enjoyed, the Lord said, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy." But he added, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live;" by which (namely, seeing the face of God) we understand such a discovery of the Divine glory as awaits God's people in another world, but which in this life they are incapable of enduring. And he further added, "Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen."[1] In Christ, the Mediator, the Father is revealed. In the mellowed lustre of His Person and work and love a sinner may behold a holy God and live, yea, rejoice with trembling. It is a beautiful and not unnatural conjecture, that the death of Moses,[2] while as yet his eye was not dim nor his natural force abated, was occasioned by his receiving the full answer to the prayer which he offered at this time; that the earthly house gave way under the surpassing glory which disclosed itself to him, and his ransomed spirit passed into the immediate presence of God. When the apostle Paul speaks of

[1] Exod. xxxiii. 18-23. [2] Deut. xxxiv. 5-7.

the privileges of the New Testament Church consequent on the manifestation in the flesh of God's eternal Son, and on His death and resurrection, he says, "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."[1] And yet in another place, in reference to the glory to be revealed, he says, "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."[2] And so, when the apostle John is speaking of the glory of heaven, it is said, among other things, "They shall see his *face;*"[3] which cannot mean His essence, but His glory beheld directly, and not through the medium of ordinances as in this life. The heart being altogether pure, there being no "spot or wrinkle or any such thing," and the intellectual eye being purged and strengthened with all might, God is seen—we dare not say, and ought not to say, in the mystery of His being—but yet in the splendour of His perfections and character and government and ways, as the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, the God of glory, the Creator, the moral Governor, the Redeemer, the Triune God, the God of salvation—in the face of Jesus Christ.

It is the remark of the eminent Dr. Love,[4] "There was a time, when, with respect to the objective display of the Divine glory, it might be truly said that earth was richer than heaven. When Jesus was visibly in this world, it contained a more precious treasure than was to be found in the highest heaven." Following out this thought, may we not say that heaven was enriched beyond all that the minds of saints or angels could conceive previous to its realization, when the King of glory, after finishing

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 18.
[2] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.
[3] Rev. xxii. 1-4.
[4] Sermons, vol. ii. p. 42.

His work of humiliation, passed thither amidst the acclamations of the heavenly host:—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." A new help was given them to see God, in the Lamb that was slain; a new and boundless field was opened up, to be traversed untiringly through the ages to come, in making fresh and increasing discoveries of the riches of the glory of the Divine perfections as manifested in the work of redemption.

God delights in His holy creatures, the work of His hands;—the angels excelling in strength whom He has kept in their integrity, and the redeemed above whom He has made His own at such a cost. He holds fellowship with them, and they walk with Him and serve Him. And there, there is the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb:" and "in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, is there the tree of life, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him." "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."[1] Can we hope to be admitted to that glorious place, to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever? This question will, in some measure, be answered, by considering the words that follow.

"*With him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.*"

What a change or descent this from the high and holy place! Yet not so wonderful in being a descent from heaven to earth;—for the condescension of Jehovah is

[1] Rev. xxii. 1-3, 5.

equal to His majesty; He clothes the grass of the field; He hears the young ravens when they cry; not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him; the misery of the meanest of His rational creatures upon earth moves His compassion;—but the descent, in this case, is from the holy place to the heart of a sinner. This is something too great to be believed, unless something more wonderful still were also true, that the second Person in the glorious Godhead came down from heaven to Bethlehem and Calvary in order that God might again have a dwelling-place in the hearts of sinful men. God the Father sent Him —such was His love,—and He came in the likeness of sinful flesh—such was the love of the Son—to expiate human guilt, the guilt of banishing God from the heart; that it might be consistent with the glory and the holiness of the High and Holy One to put forth His power in cleansing the heart and preparing it again to be His temple.

The atoning and redeeming work of God's Incarnate Son is the greatest above all measure of God's works. But next to it in greatness and in the grace manifested (though we see it not till we become its subjects) is the work of the Holy Spirit in the defiled, stony, and proud heart of a sinner, so renewing it as that it is fitted to be the habitation of God. This is work in which the exceeding greatness of God's power, as well as the exceeding riches of His grace, is gloriously displayed.[1] He takes the veil away; He takes the stony heart away; He shows us in His fiery law His righteousness and His anger against sin; He lets in the light of that law on our hearts; He throws it back on all that we have ever done; He makes us sensible of the insupportable load of the guilt of sin. Then we feel His word to be as the "fire and the hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces." But this is not enough.

[1] Eph. i. 19; ii. 1-7.

He shows us His grace, His majestic grace, revealed in His Son—stooping from the high and holy place to rescue sinners from going down to the pit. He causes us to hear the voice of that grace—the grace which we have been despising—saying, "Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Then it is that true humility, a sense of utter unworthiness, a disposition to humble ourselves and to exalt God, is wrought in the heart. The sense of spiritual need is met by the discovery of the fulness that is in Christ, and the fears of wrath are removed by faith in His atoning blood; but with growth in the knowledge of God and in the experience of His grace, and growth in the knowledge of sin and of the plague of the heart, there is growth in humility. He who says, "I am less than the least of all saints," will join the sinner at God's footstool in also saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner! It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not." Humility is thus the right disposition of heart in a fallen yet redeemed creature,—a view of God's majesty, holiness, and grace, and a sense of his own emptiness and unworthiness, leading him to exalt God and to glory only in Him. And where there is humility in its prime and chief exercise towards God, there will be humility towards fellow-creatures and brethren in the Lord; not only because humility has love as its sister grace—love leading one to honour all men, but especially the brethren—but because every Christian knows his own obligations, shortcomings, and sins, as he cannot know those of others.

With him that is of such a spirit God dwells. Humility is the fruit of His own grace; it is precious to Him on this account. There is much of God to be seen in it; it is the disposition which fits one for valuing mercy,

for seeing the glory of the Saviour, for holding fellowship with and enjoying God. Therefore do we read, "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."[1] "This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."[2] "Be clothed with humility, for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."[3] The humble heart is a congenial dwelling-place to the high and lofty One, as surely as is the high and holy place; as truly so, though sin remains in that heart; for sin in the contrite heart, as mourned over and hated, testifies of sin as atoned for and condemned in the precious death of Christ. Therefore can a holy God dwell with him that is of a humble spirit, though he is still a sinner.

And, just in proportion to the condescension manifested in this indwelling, may we expect great and precious fruits. When God becomes man, his holy creatures may look for consequences to follow, worthy of such a manifestation and such expenditure. When a holy God comes to dwell in the heart of one who is still a sinful man, we may expect evidences of His presence there, and evidences that a great work is being wrought by Him there. And such a work is the cherishing of the bruised reed and smoking flax till judgment is sent forth to victory; the purifying of the heart more and more; the preserving

[1] Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. [2] Luke xviii. 14. [3] 1 Pet. v. 5, 6.

of the soul from falling away; the preparing of the contrite heart for the services of a holy heaven and for being the eternal habitation of God by His Spirit.

But He dwells also "with him that is of a contrite spirit, *to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite one.*"

Those who are made humble in spirit need Divine consolation and support, under a sense of their sinfulness, unworthiness, barrenness and spiritual helplessness. In the remembrance of sin, or under present experience of the power of sin, or amid the peculiar trials to which they are subjected, they need to be kept from despondency—which is no friend to humility—and from the sorrow of the world which worketh death. And their God is the God of "all comfort," who "comforteth those that are cast down," and "healeth the broken in heart."[1] How soon would the wounded spirit fail under a sense of guilt and in the remembrance of all that has been done against infinite glory and infinite grace, unless relief were to come from on high, and the hand which wounded should heal! For the Lord "will not contend for ever, neither will he be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before him, and the souls which he hath made."[2] Are there those who need, not the comfort which anything worldly can give, but which a hope and a sense of pardoning mercy inspires? The Lord can and does revive them by the powerful application of such words as these, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." "Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Are there those who need to be revived under a sense of

[1] 2 Cor. i. 3; vii. 6; Ps. cxlvii. 3. [2] Isa. lvii. 16.

the hardness of their hearts, their unaffectedness by what ought to keep them in a habitually melted, tender frame of spirit? The Lord can revive such by sending His own word of promise to them with power, and helping them to trust in Him for its fulfilment:—"I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." Are there those who need to be revived under a sense of spiritual decay (a sad and solemn discovery to the child of God), and who, while humbled, are all but overwhelmed by the discovery, while they say, "Oh that it were with me as in months past, in the days when God preserved me!" Is there no reviving power in the promise, "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from them. I will be as the dew unto Israel"? Are there those circumstanced as Paul was when he said, "I am carnal, sold under sin;" "For what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I;" "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"[1]—striving in every service after conformity to the spiritual and holy law, and yet never reaching it, nay, it may seem, becoming more and more unconformed to it; never believing as they would, or praying as they would, or loving as they would, but iniquity prevailing against them? There is consolation for such where Paul found it, "So then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." "I thank God, through Jesus Christ my Lord." Or are there those who are ready to sink under the pressure of sore trial—for the flesh is weak—or because they are so blind to the hand of God, or because they see anger and not love in His holy dealings with them? Yet He supports them. How many of His people have had it to testify, "When their foot slipped, His mercy held them up!" He teaches them

[1] Rom. vii. 14, 15, 24.

true and absolute subjection to the Father of spirits; nay more, He shows them love as mixing the bitter cup, and as handing it to them with the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness." "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee."

Thus does God comfort His people in all their tribulations, till at length He wipes away every tear from their eyes; and till walking in white in a better world, they tell one another of the way by which He led them, and how He did all things well.

I shall not dwell on the important general application to be made of this subject;—the light which it is intended to cast on the character of Jehovah as glorious in holiness and glorious in grace, the instruction with which it furnishes us in regard to what religion much consists in, namely, humility and (especially in this world) contrition of spirit, agreeably to Christ's teaching in the days of His flesh, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant;" and therefore the warning, so much needed in our day, which it gives against the religion which dispenses with repentance and deepening humiliation because of sin on the part of the accepted and adopted believer.

But let me specially apply the subject with reference to the sacrament of the supper:—

1. As an ordinance of special fellowship or communion with God. And such it is. It is sitting with Him at His table. As only the contrite in heart can have communion with a bruised Saviour in the gospel, so only they can

have communion with Him in the sacrament. The deeper the sense of sin, the more precious is the balm of the covenant; the deeper the humiliation, the more glorious is grace in the soul's view. Besides, the more the Lord humbles Himself in the exercise of His adorable grace—and in no ordinance is this so much to be seen as in the ordinance of the supper—the louder the call to His people to put their shoes from off their feet. If, therefore, you would have nearness to and fellowship with God in His ordinance, seek after contrition and humility of spirit; and seek it in the Lord's way, through the Holy Spirit bringing sin to your remembrance and showing you sin in *the cross.*

2. As an ordinance for special consolation, through the help afforded in it for realizing the glory of the one sacrifice for sin and the unchangeableness of the love which passeth knowledge; an ordinance for consolation, in order to a closer walk with God, and to a hopeful and vigorous following after holiness. If you need deliverance from a doubting of your personal interest in the Saviour, that you may give yourself with a heart freed from killing fear to the great work of purifying yourself; if you need some blessed token for good that to you belongs the promise, "Sin shall not have dominion over you," so that in the strength of grace and in the hope of victory you may be engaged in the conflict with sin that dwelleth in you; if under a painful sense of past unfruitfulness or past declensions you seek earnestly to know how you can be kept in time to come, how you can cleave to the Lord and redeem the rest of short life for that work which cannot be done in the grave; or if, under sore personal trial or painful bereavements, you need that peace which Christ gives, that you may be enabled in truth and from experience to speak well of His name and His ways, then hear the Lord's

voice, saying, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it;" and take encouragement to pour out your heart before Him, that He may manifest Himself to you in another way than He does unto the world, and give you so to appropriate the strong consolation which He hath provided for the "heirs of promise," as that you shall, to the end, follow them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.

SERMON XIX.

"GRIEVE NOT THE SPIRIT."

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."—EPH. IV. 30.

THERE seems to be a great tendency in the present day to overlook the importance of rigidly adhering to the whole revealed mind of God regarding the way of salvation, and of being established in the faith of it. Wherever this tendency exists, we must view it as indicating a failing either in the reverent study of God's Word, or in that inward vigour—the effect of feeding on the doctrines of the cross and of a growing acquaintance with them—which is at the root of all that is fruitful and precious in Christian practice. All the peculiar doctrines of the gospel have a practical tendency; that is to say, they are designed to influence, and, when truly received, do influence and regulate the conscience, the heart, and the life. This is true in an especial manner of the most mysterious and yet most vital of all doctrines—the doctrine of the Three-one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There is no doctrine more above our comprehension; though there is nothing in it which is against our reason, inasmuch as we are not required to believe, as scoffers assert, that three are one, and one three in the same sense. And yet there is no doctrine which is more practical. It enters into the very essence of

the Christian life to know the Father in His love, the Son in His mediation and grace, and the Spirit in His fellowship. The greatness of redemption is to be seen in this, that to each Person of the Godhead there is assigned His peculiar place or province in the work. To the Father it belongs to appoint everything in regard to the way of salvation, to choose sinners to eternal life, to send His Son, to accept of Him in His work, to justify those that believe in Him, and to manifest Himself as a reconciled God, Father, and Portion.[1] To the Son it belongs to purchase redemption by His sufferings and death, and in His state of exaltation to be Head over all things to the Church.[2] And to the Holy Ghost it belongs to put us in possession of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

The peculiar work of the Holy Ghost was described in the preceding part of this epistle as that of the Quickener and the Indweller. He quickens those " dead in trespasses and sins :"[3] and He dwells in His people as the Spirit of fellowship or of access to the Father[4]—preserving and strengthening, and carrying on His great work in the heart, the work of sanctification, according to His own nature as the Holy Spirit, according to the purpose of the Father, to the design of the Son in dying, and to the holiness of the law in all its precepts.[5] And now in our text believers are declared to be *sealed* with the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption.

Let us, first, inquire into the meaning of this " sealing unto the day of redemption ;" and, secondly, consider the exhortation founded on it.

I. We must connect this verse with the apostle's previous statement, " In whom also, after that ye believed, ye

[1] Eph. i. 3-6. [2] Eph. i. 7, 22, 23 ; v. 25-27.
[3] Eph. ii. 1 ; compared with John iii. 6.
[4] Eph. ii. 18, 22 ; vi. 18. [5] Eph. iii. 16 ; i. 4 ; v. 26 ; iv. 17-32.

were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession" (or of the peculiar people), "unto the praise of his glory."[1] It is evident that whatever may be the precise nature of this privilege, it is something which follows faith and is consequent upon it. It follows the work of the Spirit as the Quickener; it follows the grace of adoption; and it accompanies the giving of the Spirit as the Spirit of adoption.

It may help to clear the views of some on this point, to notice that there is a twofold giving of the Holy Spirit: a giving to work faith, and a giving consequent on faith; the former, referred to by Christ when He says, "When he (the Comforter) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment;"[2] and the latter, referred to in the words, "That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."[3] Every sinner, as a sinner who needs to be united to Christ, to be born again, if he would see the Lord, has a warrant to pray to God in the Mediator's name for the Holy Spirit; but it is the peculiar privilege of the children of God that the Spirit which *has* united them to Jesus is given to them to carry out the designs of that wondrous union, and to enable them to comport themselves suitably to their new relation as the children of God.

In the sealing of the Spirit there seems to be a reference to the two ordinary uses of sealing among men. First, it is to authenticate. The Holy Spirit is God's mark put upon His people. The Spirit without measure was the Father's mark put upon His Son in the day of His humiliation: the Spirit in measure is the mark which He puts upon His chosen people. It is thus they are to be marked out from the world as a peculiar people. It is

[1] Eph. i. 13, 14. [2] John xvi. 8. [3] Gal. iii. 14.

this which is to be the evidence to themselves that they are the children of God. They may not be able indeed at all times to read this evidence, though some find it so easy to carry about with them an undoubting persuasion of their sonship; but when the Holy Spirit bears witness with their spirits, when He sheds abroad the love of God in their hearts, then they know that they are His.

Secondly, the sealing is for the purpose of security; and this seems to be specially pointed at when it is said that the Holy Spirit seals "unto the day of redemption." God's people are preserved and kept by Him. They have been redeemed—with a redemption of which the redemption out of Egypt was the type; they have been brought out of the house of sore and cruel bondage, and have been led through the Red Sea; but there is a wilderness to cross ere their redemption be completed—a great and terrible wilderness, which is strewed thickly with the carcases of those who have perished in the ages that are past; and though they have manna from heaven to eat, and water from the rock to drink of, and the pillar of cloud and fire to conduct them in the way, yet they have hardships to endure, enemies to encounter—many temptations tending to make them faint and be discouraged, to cast away their confidence and draw back to perdition. Can they then entertain the well-grounded hope that they shall reach the uttermost bounds of the wilderness, and not only see the heavenly Canaan, but pass in safety the intervening river and enter on possession of the promised land? Yes, for they are sealed by the Holy Spirit. As the Son of God has engaged to present each one of His people before the Father—not one lost by the way—so the Divine Spirit charges Himself with the work of securing their preservation and their growing sanctification, till grace issues in glory. This will be on "the day of redemption"—

the day of death, when they shall go hence to be with Christ; but rather the day of resurrection, when the natural body shall be redeemed from the grave, and the mystical body shall be complete. Hence it is that the Holy Spirit is "the earnest of the inheritance," because He has undertaken to preserve them to the end. If this were not the case, no present enjoyment of the life of God, no present fellowship with God, would be any foretaste to the soul of something better. But because the Holy Spirit is the seal, He is the earnest of the inheritance, and the least measure of true spiritual enjoyment in the service of God is the pledge of the fulness of joy at His right hand. This unspeakable gift of God is "without repentance," and therefore is the broken heart the pledge of eternal glory.

II. The exhortation, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God," is in the text founded on believers' possession of these privileges—on their being interested in God's unchangeable love, and secured in a state of grace by the continued indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Let not this statement be misapprehended. I do not say that the Christian's *natural* obligations to live holily are in any measure interfered with by the privilege of being in Christ; instead of being weakened, they are deepened. I do not mean, therefore, that he ought not to recognise the authority as well as the love of God in such an exhortation as this. But his whole strength for discharging his obligations lies in the provision of the Holy Spirit to "work in him to will and to do of God's good pleasure;" and in realizing how incalculable his obligations are, he would sink into utter hopelessness except for this blessed provision. Oh, it is much to make such acquaintance with God's law as leads us, while renouncing it for ever as a ground of hope, to recognise its unchanging obligation as a holy and blessed rule; and to make such ac-

quaintance with grace as deepens our sense of obligation, and under this deepening sense of it leads us to cling closer and closer to the provision of the Holy Spirit. There is a strong tendency in our hearts to pervert the blessed truths of God's word;—to make the exhortations feed our self-righteousness; or, under colour of exalting the grace of God and the liberty of His people, to do away with the spring of holiness and the incentive to vigilance which lie in a recognition of the sacred authority of God.

Again, the words "*Grieve* not the Holy Spirit of God," bring before us the peculiar love of the Spirit to His people. True, He is incapable of human passions. He is the self-sufficient and unchanging Jehovah. But this and similar language is employed in accommodation to our weakness, to teach us in the strongest way in which language can do it how loving the Holy Spirit is, and how His heart is set on the true good, even the sanctification, of His people. He is capable of being grieved because of the love which He bears to them and the interest he feels in them. Speaking after the manner of men, His happiness is concerned in their walking worthy of their privileges. As an affectionate father grieves over the misconduct of a son and the wretchedness which he has brought upon himself, just because he loves him; so there is a love in the Holy Spirit to the subjects of His grace—freer, purer, infinitely richer than we can conceive—which is wounded by their unkindness, and by the misery which follows it.

Again, this exhortation is one the force of which will be felt by the Christian and by no other. Believers are alive to the force of this appeal. Their hearts are capable of appreciating it. They have been made alive to the wondrous nature of the love of the Three-one God and to the obligations arising out of it. The new nature which they have received is one that is afraid of abusing goodness and

of sinning against love. They are more afraid of this than of any temporal suffering. It is not enough for them to have some good hope of being saved from hell. That is all the natural heart desires; but that would be no joyful hope to the Christian—no hope at all—unless with it he could indulge the hope of being enabled to love and to glorify God. That is what he chiefly desires. And oh! when grace is in exercise, such an exhortation as this will go to the Christian's heart—to the heart of his heart—"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God."

Yet believers *may* grieve the Holy Spirit, and grieve Him "to the heart." They may fall into sin, and bring discredit on their profession. And professing Christians may make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience. What then is the nature of this sin? It is not the *presence* of sin in the heart that grieves the Divine Spirit. It is a wonderful truth that He is not dishonoured in dwelling in the heart in which there is sin—sin which has been atoned for, sin against which sentence of death has been brought forth, sin which is mortified, but still sin. Such is the glory of the cross that the Divine Spirit is not dishonoured in dwelling there. Nor is it a deep painful *sense* of the power of sin that grieves Him. This is one of the very fruits of His grace, one of those things in which He has pleasure, that the soul's groanings should be heard, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

But the Holy Spirit may be grieved (more openly or secretly), first by the *indulgence* of sin—the sins referred to in the context, and such like. He is the Spirit of holiness. Now we are not to infer that the Christian can live in the practice of any of those sins which are specified, or of any known sin, so that he might be fitly called an impure, a vindictive, or a covetous man. The contrary is directly expressed, "This ye know, that no whoremonger, nor un-

clean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."[1] But it is plainly implied that the Christian is in danger of falling into any one of these sins at any one time: and if, through neglect of keeping the heart or through the violence of sudden temptation, he should do so; if he should seem again to put on the old man which he has put off; if he should violate the sacred obligations of truth, or be guilty of an act of dishonesty; if any corrupt communication should proceed out of his mouth; if, after having begun to make acquaintance with the Lamb of God, he should cherish an unforgiving spirit against an offending brother; if he should fall into intemperance, or into the vile sin of impurity—a sin specially opposed to the nature of God—then, while he defiles his conscience, brings death on his spirit, and (if his sin be an open one) a scandal on the cause of Christ, he grieves the Holy Spirit to the heart. Oh how base thus to requite the good Spirit of the Lord! Let him among us who thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

The Holy Spirit is grieved by the believer's giving entertainment to whatever unbefits the presence of such a Guest. If we had a guest who was worthy of the highest honour, how anxious would we be to avoid whatever might seem to indicate disrespect or occasion one unpleasant feeling, though if he were greatly our superior we might feel under some restraint in his company. There is no restraint engendered by the presence of the Comforter; where He is, *there* is liberty: but there is a holy fear that becomes the child's familiarity. Is it a truth that He, the Spirit of holiness, dwells in His people?—shall we defile

[1] Eph. v. 5, 6.

His temple? Is He the Spirit of love?—shall we cherish feelings of envy and malice in His sight? Is He the Spirit of gracious liberty, and shall we engage in His service as though it were a slavery or bondage, or as though it were not the beginning of heaven? Do we thus requite the Lord's Spirit? Has He ever been "a wilderness to us or a land of darkness?"

He is grieved by ingratitude or indifference, by the want of a deep sense of obligation to His love and grace. If there were a poor wretched man who had good done him by one whom he had hated and counted an enemy; if through the pure and self-denying exertions of such a one he had been rescued from poverty, shame, or death; and if his benefactor had reason to know that after all there was not a spark of genuine gratitude in his heart, would not this pain him, and the more acutely just in proportion to the tenderness of his own feelings and the loftiness of his principles? Who can estimate the obligations of the believer to the grace and love of the Holy Spirit, who visited him when he was an enemy, quickened him when he was dead in trespasses and sins, washed him with the washing of regeneration, showed him the love of God in Christ, and gave him to taste of the Lord's graciousness? Surely the feeling which, above all others, should be ever ascendant in the Christian's heart is gratitude—a sense of obligation and of admiring wonder in contemplating the grace of God. And, as already noticed, this is characteristic of the Christian. The love of the Holy Spirit is wondrous to him, as is the love of the Father and of the Son. But oh! if he should lose in a great measure this sense of obligation; and if things should come to this, that he is found compassing holy duties and engaged in holy services while his heart is cold and he is contented that it should be so, is there no grieving of the Holy Spirit here?

Again, the Holy Spirit is grieved by the want of concern on the part of His people to fall in with His great design in dwelling in the heart. That design is to keep them awake, earnest, laborious in watching against sin, and in following holiness. When we make precious privileges a pillow, instead of finding in them a stimulus and encouragement to diligence; when we give place to lethargy, sloth, and unwatchfulness as though it were not said, "Sleep not as do others;" "Do with thy might whatsoever thy hand findeth to do;" "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation;" then we grieve the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is grieved when His blessed motions and suggestions are not cherished. When He comes to stir up the soul to hear the voice of Jesus, "Open to me, my sister, my love, for my head is filled with dew and my locks with the drops of the night;" and when, instead of responding, "The voice of my Beloved!" we say, "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" or when, after a gracious breathing on the soul (perhaps at a communion season) such as was vouchsafed to the two travellers to Emmaus, when the Stranger spake to them till their hearts burned within them,—when after some true enlargement of heart in the work of God, some view and experience of the glory of the cross, we do not constrain Jesus to abide with us, but are prevailed against by the deceitful, sluggish heart and the cares of the world to let Him withdraw Himself—oh, do we not grieve the Holy Spirit?

Once more, we grieve Him when we do not employ Him to do His own work in us as the Glorifier of Christ. Which of the saints, indeed, fails not in this? But there are two special sins to which God's people are liable: want of sense of need of, and thirst for, the grace of

the Spirit (when should the Christian be without such a sense of need and such thirst?), and want of trust in the Spirit's power and love. And therefore we ask little, and we expect and receive little from Him who is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

There are various degrees in this sin, as there are various degrees of declension in the child of God; and there are degrees in the severity with which the Spirit of grace manifests His holy displeasure.[1] There is the withdrawal of all consolation—this invariably attends the regarding of iniquity in the heart; there is a withering of the soul's graces; and there is a total and final withdrawal of the Holy Spirit. True, this will not happen in the case of any of His people; but a surer mark of a graceless state cannot be, than to keep hold of such a hope as this while the soul cleaves to sin, while it is not striving to be delivered from all sin.

Oh, if I should be addressing a young Christian who has come to know the Shepherd's voice, the preciousness of the promise of a new heart, the preciousness of the courts of God's house, of His ordinances, and of the way of holiness, let me counsel him—if he would have Bible evidence of being a true Christian, one of the sanctified ones; if he would not join the crowd of mere professors of Christ's name; if he would follow the footsteps of the flock and do something for the great end of life, the glory of the Redeemer—let me counsel him to seek, as above rubies, a tender conscience, a conscience made and kept tender amidst all the deadening and corrupting influences to which he is exposed, and to be more afraid of losing his first love than of any temporal suffering.

Let us endeavour now to apply the subject.

1 Isa. lxiii. 10.

1. Will not the Christian's language be, "Who can understand his errors?" Who can understand his sins against this Divine Person, not only in the days of his ignorance, but since he obtained mercy? Who has "rendered unto Him" according to the grace manifested? Who is he, whose conscience has been ever tender, and whose heart has been ever wakeful and watchful, and filled with an overpowering sense of gratitude? May not some of us recall special seasons when we were guilty of grieving Him, if not by open sin, yet by our coldness, our sloth, our selfishness, our ingratitude, our forgetfulness of the vows made in the time of trouble or at a communion table, our forgetfulness of signal interpositions on our behalf when we said "our foot slippeth" and His mercy held us up, our little sense of the preciousness of Christ, our feeble and inconstant seeking of the salvation of others? Who but He who changes not could have borne with us? What reason to adore the forbearance of the Divine Spirit! And what a call to confess and sorrow over this sin, to supplicate mercy and grace to heal our backslidings and to keep us from the evil!

2. Is there one now addressed who has to look back to a time when it was good for him to draw near to God, when he delighted in prayer, when he saw a preciousness in the Bible which could not be told, when he felt it laid upon him by the Lord to keep his heart, and to live to Christ's glory, when he felt the value of time and sought daily communion with an unseen Saviour; but the tempter came, and the world came, and the lusts of other things came, and he was less in his closet, he found less and less time for the Word and for self-communing;—and then came a sad change over the inner man; Christ was no longer a present, precious Christ, but a distant object; the prayer, "Lift upon me the light of thy countenance," gave

place to the sad cry, "Who will show us any good?" But the Lord, by His Word and Providence, has so far awakened him that he is now an unhappy, wretched man, saying, "Oh that it were with me as in months past!" Friend, if those days are ever to return, if you are to know that you were not then deceiving yourself, that return must be brought about in connection with your being exercised as David was exercised, when he said, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindnesses; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions;" "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me."[1] Tremble at the thought of going to the Lord's table while sin separates between you and God. But "give not rest to your eyes, or slumber to your eyelids," till that which has made the separation be taken away. The blood of Christ *can* cleanse it away. The Spirit of Christ *can* make your heart contrite.

3. The Holy Spirit, who is often grieved by His people, is resisted and vexed by sinners. He strives with them, for He is a compassionate and a loving Spirit. And they resist Him; for they choose death, and forsake their own mercy, and will not come to Christ for life. He strives with the impenitent, when He brings the solemn command and call to repentance near to them, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." They resist him when they continue as indifferent and insensible as though hell were a fable, or as though their "heart could endure, or their hands be strong, in the days when God shall deal with them."[2] He strives with them when He wakens up conscience to give its response to the Word, so that they tremble in the apprehension of a judgment to come. They resist Him when they say, as

[1] Ps. li. 1, 11. [2] Ezek. xxii. 14.

many do, " Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." He strives with them more powerfully still when He brings the righteousness and salvation of Christ very near to them, and causes them to realize that their eternity turns on their accepting or rejecting an offered Saviour. They resist Him when, preferring the world and sin to Christ, they continue Christless and unbelieving still.

Fellow-sinner, resist not the good Spirit of the Lord. He strives with thee, because He has no pleasure in thy death, because there is a precious Saviour to whom He would unite thee, with whose grace and love He would make thee acquainted. He strives with thee, because He is willing to enter thy heart, to purify it, to dwell in it as the Comforter. Oh! resist Him not; for He will not always strive. He may cast thee off for ever, and leave thee, as others have been left, to be altogether " hardened by the deceitfulness of sin," to walk in utter unconcern to the end after the course of this world, or to waken up at the last only to find that it is too late, and that the door is shut. Harden not your heart. Or if you should say that it is too strong for you (would God that you felt this aright, that you felt your need of the omnipotent energy of the Holy Spirit!), then know, that just as free as Christ is, so free is Christ's Spirit. He is willing to be your Renewer and Sanctifier, to deliver you from the heart of stone. " How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."[1] Look up to God, then, through the Mediator, and pray, pray for the Holy Spirit; for it is " according to his will " to give His Spirit.

[1] Prov. i. 22, 23.

Or, if you will have the same gospel in another form, Jesus, who came to save the lost, who died for sinners, who is "exalted a Prince and a Saviour," has the Holy Spirit in all fulness to bestow. Look therefore unto Him, who is as ready in answer to the cry of a perishing sinner to send His Spirit, as He was ready in the days of His flesh to hear every cry of distress, and to manifest Himself as full of compassion.

SERMON XX.

"FOLLOW HOLINESS."

"Follow . . . holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
HEB. XII. 14.

IN directing your attention to these great words, I will inquire, first, into the nature of holiness; secondly, I will consider the exhortation, "Follow holiness;" and thirdly, the solemn consideration by which it is enforced.

I. Looking to the Lord for his teaching, let us inquire first into the nature of this holiness which we are to pursue or follow after. What is it? In answer to this question, I observe—

1. That to be holy is to be *like God.* "Be ye holy, for I am holy."[1] It is the peculiar glory of God that He is holy. He is said to be "glorious in holiness." We read of the seraphim and of the Church above giving Him glory specially for His holiness. "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts." And the Redeemer in His intercessory prayer calls Him "holy Father" and "righteous Father." To be holy, then, is to reflect the moral image of God. It is to resemble Him in so far as the creature can resemble the Creator, to be a partaker (as Peter expresses it) of the Divine nature,[2] and therefore to be of the same mind with God; to see spiritual beauty where God sees it, to love what God loves, to aim at what He aims. It was the

[1] 1 Pet. i. 16. [2] 2 Pet. i. 4.

glory of man that he was made after the image of God. Very striking is it to notice how the creation of man is introduced. The eternal Three, as it were, confer together, and they say, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." The Lord formed man such a being as that he was not only altogether good (for all that came from God's hand was good), but that something of that wherein specially the beauty and glory of God Himself consists was to be seen in Him. As in the holy angels, so in innocent man, the spiritual eye could trace the lineaments of the moral image of the infinite Jehovah. It is man's misery—it is our misery that we have lost this image. It is the excellency of the work of the Holy Spirit that it restores it to the soul.

This view of holiness, as consisting in resemblance to God who is holy, is the loftiest we can take, and will be felt to be somewhat dazzling by those who bring their minds seriously to bear upon it. How inadequate the views of the Divine holiness entertained even by the saints in this world; and how difficult to give expression even to what they know of it!

2. To be holy is to be *conformed to God's law*, that law which, making known to us His will, reflects His image and mind. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."[1] To be holy, perfectly holy, is to have one's whole nature conformed to this standard; to have the mind filled with the knowledge of the excellency of God and of His infinite worthiness to be loved and adored; to have the will in absolute and blessed subjection to His will, as what ought to rule the

[1] Mark xii. 30, 31.

universe; and to have the heart possessed with supreme, fervent love to Him, and pure disinterested love to our neighbour, so that all the words and actions shall be a fitting expression of that love. This is the law to which all in heaven are conformed, and which, as a law of liberty, knits them together in love to God and to one another. And the Holy Spirit writes it in the heart—the new heart. This then is another important view of holiness, and a lofty view to one who has made acquaintance with the spirituality and breadth of God's law. But

3. To be holy is to be *like God's holy child Jesus*, like Him who, as God, is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person," and as man, is one on whom infinite purity rested with delight. For the law of God was in His heart; "every imagination of the thoughts" of that heart was only good continually, and every word and action was altogether in accordance with its demands. He had work to do on earth—work which He "finished"—such as no mere creature could have accomplished; that of pacifying an offended God and magnifying an outraged law. And in Him, as man, the beauties of holiness shone forth as they never did in paradise, or in any mere creature; for the "Spirit of the Lord rested upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."[1] He delighted in His Father's will, when it was part of that will that He should be forsaken of His Father. He loved His enemies while they were nailing Him to the tree. As the Surety He thus had work to do, and sufferings to endure, in which He was alone; and, as man, He exercised grace in circumstances such as His people can never be placed in, and in a measure to which no other can attain. And yet

[1] Isa. xi. 2, etc.

He was a perfect pattern, and a fitting example to them of the holiness to which they are to aspire, an example in true human nature and in a low condition, an example in the most varied circumstances of trial, an example of the faith and love, the humility and self-denial, the meekness and patience and zeal and submission which His people are called to exercise. "Let that mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Thus Jesus not only made atonement for sin and purchased sanctification for His people, but He provided for them in His holy life the pattern of the holiness which they are to follow; as it is written, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son"—"Leaving us an example that we should follow his steps." To be holy is then to be like Him who exemplified perfect conformity to God's law.

It is of great importance that we have right views of what is meant by holiness, lest we put in its place mere virtue or outward righteousness, or something else that is not only much less in degree, but different in kind. For it is a humbling truth that we are by nature not merely defective in holiness, but utterly destitute of it. Therefore did Jesus, in His interview with the Jewish ruler,[1] begin His instruction by telling him that he must be born again. We must experience such a great change as this—have a new life given us through the quickening power of God the Holy Spirit; such a life as that the understanding shall be made light in the Lord, the affections take a heaven-ward direction, and the will run in the same channel with the will of God; such a life as will express itself in an immediate reception of Christ the offered Saviour, that in Him we may be justified and sanctified. The great enemy of souls and our own deceitful hearts combine their efforts to

[1] John iii.

hide from us the reality and the greatness of this change. And many in consequence put themselves by profession among the sanctified ones who are strangers to holiness. No doubt there are varieties in the manner of the Spirit's dealing, and in the degrees of experience among the children of the new birth. But the change is a real and a vast one. And our Christianity turns on our having undergone it. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."[1]

II. These observations may have prepared us for considering the exhortation, "Follow holiness," as addressed to the regenerate, or the man in Christ.

First, the exhortation implies that the work of sanctification is only begun in conversion. The work of regeneration is a glorious work; but it is not of such a nature as that the soul which is its subject is made perfectly holy. Justification is indeed complete at once; but sanctification is a progressive work. God could at once perfectly sanctify the soul; but, for infinitely wise reasons, He does not effect this. The convert is compared to a "new-born babe;" the principle of holiness is compared to seed: there must first be "the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." The work of renewal extends to the whole man, but no part is completely sanctified. The old man is crucified and dying, yet still he lives. Hence the immediate effect of conversion is a new conflict between the flesh and the Spirit. "When I would do good, evil is present with me."[2] The existence of this conflict is an evidence of life; its habitual absence is the sign of spiritual death. Holiness is thus not at once attained; it has to be "followed." Therefore must there be progress in the pursuit of it, so that one shall be approaching nearer and nearer to it.

[1] 2 Cor. v. 17. [2] Rom. vii. 21.

"The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Sin must be more and more mortified. Through grace one must be getting victories over besetting sins of the temper, the tongue, or the heart, over anger and selfishness and covetousness, and pride and self-seeking. One must be learning to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." There must be growth in all the graces of the Spirit, and in all the parts of the new man—growth in the understanding, in respect of knowledge; in the affections, in respect of love and heavenliness of mind; in the will, in respect of submission and patience; growth in faith and repentance and self-denial, and in readiness to do and to suffer for Christ. There must be a taking root downwards, and a bearing fruit upwards. Remember, if you are a Christian, you must desire to grow in grace and to know whether you *are* growing. Then this work must be continued without interruption or cessation. This is one of the things which is taught us when the Christian life is compared to a race, and which is comprehended in the exhortation, "Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober." The flesh may seek repose; there may be a strong tendency to rest in past attainments; but there must be a following still of holiness. One may be released in God's providence, with advancing years and infirmities, from obligations to active service in the cause of Christ, or rendered unfit for such service; but never from his obligation to follow holiness. This is the true preservative against going back, and, under the grace of Him who is the Keeper of His people, the preservative against the assaults of all spiritual enemies—to have the desires of the heart ever after holiness. And the exhortation to follow holiness is to the most advanced as well as to the young Christian; for none reaches the mark of perfect holiness while in

this world; and none, while in this scene of conflict, and chained to a body of death, is exempt from temptation and trial. And the believer, as he grows in grace, does not see himself a holier man so much as he sees himself more and more a sinner; and therefore, while contemplating with unspeakable satisfaction the change which renewing grace has wrought in him, he is more and more denied to everything in himself as a ground of acceptance before God; and the more he has attained, the more does he apprehend how much he has to attain.

We come now, on this branch of the subject, to consider, secondly, how we can comply with this exhortation. The Spirit of God is the Author of holiness. It is of Him that God's people are born again; yet does Jesus say to all, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." He is the effectual agent in the whole work of sanctification, working in His people to will and to do; yet are they to "work out their own salvation"[1] and to "follow holiness." In addressing to you the word of exhortation, I would say,

1. That if we would follow holiness we must make sure work of having cordially received Christ by faith, for our acceptance with God and for sanctification. Without this we cannot take a step in that way of which it is said that "the wayfaring man though a fool shall not err therein." We must count the cost ere we begin to build. At the same time we do not say that one should keep back from following holiness and pressing after communion with God because there may be much fear that he has not undergone the great change of conversion. If you really desire to be found in Christ and to depart from iniquity, then do not be ever tarrying in conflict with doubts and fears, but ask the Lord to sanctify you wholly.

2. If we would follow holiness, it must be our supreme

[1] Phil. ii. 12.

desire. This heavenly thing must be held far more precious than anything of earth, if we would really attain to it. We must care for it more than for the necessary things of this life. "Labour not," said Christ, "for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." Men have to labour for the meat which perisheth; but they have to labour far more intensely for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life. Christ has promised, and His word is true, that those who seek first the kingdom of God shall have all other things added to them; while, if they do not give this the first place, then nothing else will for the time prosper with them. This is the blessed law of the kingdom of Christ: we must follow holiness *first*, if we would attain to it.

3. We must diligently use all the means of grace. We must often inquire how it is between our souls and God. We must not neglect the great work of self-examination, nor content ourselves with the occasional perfunctory discharge of it. We must keep short accounts with conscience, coming each evening to the blood of Christ, to have conscience purged there. We must be much in prayer, seeking to pour out our hearts before God, the Father of His people, and to spread every difficulty and every care before Him—to cast every burden upon Him. And the Word must dwell in us, an entertained and honoured guest. It must be our daily companion, and we must never rest satisfied without experience of its enlightening and sanctifying power. If we do not experience this, it is not for want of this power in God's Word, but because we are not looking up as we ought for the Holy Spirit to open it up to us and to send it home. We must prize the public means of grace; for they are all of Christ's appointment. If you come to God's house, not because it is a part of your religion, but to meet with and worship God, and to hear

His word, you will often have to bless Him for the word ministered to you by His servants, and to say, "It is good for me to draw near to God."

4. If we would follow holiness, we must strive to learn to live by faith on an unseen Saviour,—such a faith as makes Christ, the Christ of the gospel, a real Being, present and near; habitually to depend upon Him alone, not only as our Peace and our Righteousness, but as our Keeper, our Strength, our Life, our Friend, our sympathizing High Priest. We must be striving to learn the meaning of Christ's words better and better, "Without me ye can do nothing;" and then the meaning of the words of Paul, "Through Christ strengthening me, I can do all things;" "When I am weak, then am I strong."

5. We must seek to live under the constraining power of Christ's love. Poor, cold, and fruitless must the professed Christian life be that knows not this. If Christ's love constrained Him to "give himself for you, that he might sanctify and cleanse you with the washing of water by the word,"[1] then knowing this love—beginning to know it—you must be constrained to live to Him. O blessed end—the glory of Christ! "To me to live is Christ;" "That Christ may be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." O blessed inducement —the redeeming love of Christ!

6. We must beware of first declensions. If they be detected in their beginnings and arrested by Divine grace, you will be saved many sorrows. If unnoticed, they will prove like the letting out of water. "Take heed, therefore, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we

[1] Eph. v. 26.

are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."[1] Do not receive it as a truth, or act as though it were, that backsliding must necessarily be expected in a Christian, or that Christ has no sharp word to speak against leaving one's first love;[2] but ask His almighty grace to keep you from stumbling or going astray: and let not these solemn words depart from you, "We are not of them who draw back unto perdition."[3] Yet thanks to His name, if there are words of terrible warning there are also words of mercy and of grace for backsliders: "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings;"[4] "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity;" "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely;" "I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily and cast forth his roots as Lebanon."[5]

7. We must have respect to all Christ's commandments, without reserve. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me;" "Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments."[6] We must therefore seek from God Himself the knowledge of His commandments; for we have to remember that it is as surely a sign of a heart not right with God if we are not anxious to know His will, as it is knowingly to regard iniquity. And God's law is exceeding broad; His commandments extend to body and spirit, to the regulation of our thoughts, words, and actions; embracing our whole time upon earth, every station and every relation. They form a perfect blessed rule, setting before us how it ought to be with us in secret and in the family, in the daily duties of our calling, and as members of the church; how we are to occupy so as to glorify God, and to commend His

[1] Heb. iii. 12-14.
[2] Rev. ii. 4, 5.
[3] Heb. x. 39.
[4] Jer. iii. 22.
[5] Hos. xiv. 1, 4, 5.
[6] Ps. lxvi. 18; cxix. 6.

gospel to others. For next to the glory of God and his own salvation, the Christian ought to be most concerned for the salvation of others. Therefore strive and labour to be made useful in Christ's church—useful to His people, useful to your fellow-sinners. "None of us liveth to himself." To this you are called, that ye should "shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Such labour and such desires have a blessed, sanctifying influence. It is good to be engaged in the Lord's work, to feel under obligations to labour and pray for the temporal and spiritual good of others. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."[1] "Therefore, my beloved brethren," said Paul, addressing not the teachers but the whole members of the church, "be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."[2] There is no one who cannot be made use of for good to others if only he has a mind to the work. When God was to have His tabernacle erected in the wilderness, He found employment for the humblest and meanest in the congregation, as well as for the wealthy and the noble. There is no Christian who cannot do something, and something precious, for the rearing of a dwelling-place to the Lord.

Lastly, If we would follow holiness, we must be ever seeking to live above this world by the faith of things eternal, and ever looking for the coming of the Lord. "While we look," said Paul, "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those

[1] Matt. v. 16. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 58.

things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." "They which say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God." "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God."[1] Oh, surely it is having one's conversation in heaven that ripens for the enjoyment of a holy heaven! It is looking at the things which are eternal that weans one's affections from the world, and makes affliction to be regarded as light. And it is living in view of the second coming of Christ that preserves the spirit of watchfulness in all who love His appearing, and fans the desire for His coming in their hearts. Now let me briefly direct your attention

III. To the solemn consideration by which the exhortation is enforced. There are many precious and solemn considerations by which the Christian is urged to seek after sanctification:—God's end in choosing us in Christ, "that we should be holy;" Christ's end in dying for His people, "to redeem them from all iniquity," that He might present His church to His Father "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing;" the love of the Spirit, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit;" God's mercy to the soul, "I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Here

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 18; Col. iii. 1-4; Heb. xi. 14-16; 2 Pet. iii. 11-14.

the consideration made use of is, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

"*See the Lord*," not with the bodily eye—for no man hath thus seen, or can see, Him who is a Spirit—but with the eye of the mind purged from the corruption of sin, delivered from the dimness of vision caused by it, and enlightened in the knowledge of the infinite excellency and loveliness of God as manifested in Christ. Thus to see the Lord, enjoying His love and serving Him, is the loftiest view which is presented to us in God's word of heavenly blessedness.[1] It will be a blessed thing for the saints to have communion with one another and with the holy angels, to have the imperfect communion which they enjoy in this world perfected in heaven, to experience oneness of heart in their love to God, in their desire to exalt Him and in their love to one another:—this must be a blessed thing. But the chief and crowning blessedness will be the seeing of God, in so far as the mind is capable of comprehending His glorious excellency.

Now this blessedness cannot be enjoyed except by the holy;—and that for several reasons. The unsanctified man is an unforgiven man. He is still under the guilt of sin, and therefore condemned to endure the punishment of sin. However overwhelming the words are—would that they were oftener thought of!—out of the compassionate Saviour's lips these words proceed, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." The unsanctified man cannot see the Lord, because evil cannot dwell with Him who is holy. Once, we know, evil showed itself in heaven when a portion of the angelic host rebelled—to be visited in a moment with the tokens of God's displeasure. But we have every reason to believe that it will never again manifest itself there. The

[1] Rev. xxii. 3-5.

unsanctified man cannot see the Lord, because, were it a possible thing for him to be admitted into heaven while unsanctified, it would be no heaven, but a very hell to him. He dislikes prayer, dislikes the thoughts of God, dislikes communion with God: how could he find happiness where God is all in all?

"Without holiness," therefore, "no man shall see the Lord." He may have a place, and a place of importance and influence, in the visible church on earth; he may call Jesus Lord; he may cherish an undoubting confidence of the goodness of his state;[1] he may expect to be happy in another world; but he will be shut out from God's heaven.

Therefore, dear friends, let us ask ourselves whether we can think of heaven, the place of perfect blessedness, in this view of it—seeing the Lord, being with the Lord, so that He should possess us and that we should be swallowed up in adoring contemplation of His excellencies. There is no other heaven but the heaven which is filled with the glory of God. If we think, so far as we know ourselves, that this to us would be heaven, then are we seeking to walk in the way to it—following holiness? Do we see a beauty and a preciousness in holiness, and with full purpose of heart are we following it? If not, we have no present reason to believe that we shall be admitted to this heaven. If we expect to get to heaven without being sanctified, we do so in the face of all the warnings of God's Word. If we think we are on the way to heaven, while holiness is not yet begun, while we are still in our sins, we do so without any warrant from God's Word. No presently unregenerate or Christless sinner has any warrant from God's Word for such a hope. What grounds have you for expecting that your life will be spared, that God's Spirit will continue to strive with you, or that you will get Christ and preparation for heaven

[1] Matt. xxv. 1-10.

while you deliberately reject the Saviour now? Do you think of the case of the dying thief to whom Christ showed mercy, and who in a few short hours was sanctified and prepared for being with Christ, the Holy One, in paradise? That was a glorious work of Divine power. But alas! that such a wondrous and blessed example of the riches and power of God's grace, so full of encouragement to a sinner—yes, even to a burdened sinner on a dying bed—but yet a case in many respects without a parallel, should be deliberately abused and made to minister to carnal security, should be perverted to feed the indolence and wickedness of the heart, and thus the more to imperil or to destroy the soul! Is not this indeed "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness"? Is not this turning God's blessed mercy and everything that is precious in the gospel and in a free Saviour against one's own soul, and making that gospel—full of blessing, full of life—to be the savour of death unto death? If I am addressing any one who knows that he thus perverts the doctrine and the word of grace, I beseech you to cease from helping the wicked one to destroy your precious soul. O believe it! if you are "without Christ," you are "without hope;" nor is there any hope for you, except in fleeing to Jesus for deliverance from wrath and sin. But coming to Him in truth for His salvation, then may you hope, then may you rejoice, then will you find encouragement to follow holiness; and amidst all the trials and difficulties of the narrow way you will find a much more than counterbalancing weight of hopes and joys in the knowledge of the Saviour and in communion with Him. O cease, cease this perverting of mercy and of the blessed gospel; and to-day, while it is called to-day, ask the Lord to deliver you from hardening your heart, and to draw you to Himself, so that you may come in truth to Jesus for mercy!

You who desire to follow holiness in the face of every difficulty, and especially of experience of the power of sin dwelling in you, oh! be encouraged and strengthened by the consideration that you are not engaged in this work alone—then might you indeed despair—but that Jesus the great High Priest is making intercession at the Father's right hand, and that a special request which He puts up on behalf of His people is this, "Sanctify them through thy truth." Remember that the Holy Spirit has engaged to take up His abode in the heart, never to depart from it, but to sanctify it wholly. Oh, seek to devolve the work of your sanctification, every day afresh, upon this blessed Agent, who is infinitely ready to carry it on in you till you be holy in soul, spirit, and body.

Lastly, if it be so great a thing to be holy, then remember that correspondingly great is the beginning of the work, the soul's regeneration. Take heed lest you be found a stranger, a willing stranger, to the greatness of this work, as many are who have a name to live while they are dead. If there are any whom I now address who know that they have never experienced such a change as this, who may be listening to scriptural statements in regard to it as though they did not vitally concern them, or as though it were hopeless to expect that they should be the subjects of such a change, O sit down and ponder, as under God's eye, those great words of Jesus, "Ye must be born again." Then remember that the Holy Spirit is the Author of regeneration, and that if Jesus is free to you as a Saviour, so the Holy Spirit is free. And then remember that you are not called to sit down in passive inaction, as though you had to wait till the Spirit come to your heart to quicken and renew you; but you are called to earnest and intense prayer. And the more you feel your coldness, worldliness, and deadness, and that every-

thing about you and in you is checking concern for the one thing needful, be the more intense and earnest in prayer for the Holy Spirit. Oh, if this blessed Agent will come to you, seek, seek Him in prayer: He will make you feel that you are a sinner, and He will show you the Saviour. Have you never noticed that Christ did not confine His instructions to Nicodemus to the doctrine of the new birth, but went on to speak of faith in His name as a Saviour,[1] to teach you and me that the work of the Holy Spirit consists first in making us feel that we are sinners, then in showing us Jesus, and then in helping us as perishing sinners to look to Him for salvation?

[1] John iii. 14, etc.

SERMON XXI.

"LOOKING UNTO JESUS."

HEB. XII. 2.

THE apostle having in the preceding chapter illustrated the power of the faith which is to the saving of the soul, proceeds in this chapter to exhort the Hebrew Christians to follow "them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." He compares the Christian life to a race. True religion is not the bare, the easy profession of Christ's name. To follow Christ is arduous work, in which hardness must be endured and a conflict fought; in which the flesh must not be spared, but in which continual self-denial must be exercised; and in which there must be perseverance to the end. It is a struggle for an incorruptible crown; a journey from the city of destruction, through a world full of temptation and sources of trial, to the celestial city. The believer in Jesus is called to the enjoyment of a peace which the world cannot give, a peace which passeth understanding; but that very peace can only be enjoyed while fighting the good fight of faith, a fight which must be maintained till his dying hour. Moreover, there are things that must be laid aside if we would so run this race as to obtain;—namely, "every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." Whatever interferes with the following of Christ as the one

thing needful—in an especial manner the things of this world and its love—must be laid aside. In all circumstances the kingdom of God and His righteousness must be first sought; and growth in grace, as connected with the Divine glory, must be the thing supremely desired by the believer if he would make progress in holiness. "The sin that doth so easily beset us" must also be laid aside. There belongs to every one what we may call the sin of his temperament or constitution, which it is of great importance to know, and against the outbreakings of which special guard must be kept. There is in many, also, some sin, which in consequence of special circumstances, special fostering in the days of their impenitence, has grown to gigantic dimensions in the soul, and which must be laid aside to run this race; they must conflict with it, they must labour to mortify it. But especially there is indwelling sin manifesting its power in unbelief—a sin of which the apostle speaks so much in this epistle, and against which, above all others, he warns his brethren —"the evil heart of unbelief:"—this must be laid aside, in the sense of keeping it under and mortifying it. Further, patience is necessary; patient continuance in well-doing, patience in the enduring of whatever trials or afflictions may attend the following of Christ. For every follower of Christ will be tested as to the reality of his principles, and as to the truth of grace in him; he may be called to suffer—and to suffer much; to part with his earthly all, and with life itself, for Christ's sake and the gospel's; and while many are offended, while many draw back and shrink from the cross, he must take it up and bear it after Christ if he would follow Him.

It may be said, "These are heavy and great requirements; who is sufficient for these things?" Well, there are grounds of encouragement. There is, first, what we may call

a subordinate ground of encouragement, yet a very precious one—"We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses." It is refreshing to find the inspired apostle speaking thus of the Old Testament saints. Often we may be ready to think that they were few; and they *were* few in particular ages of the Church; but yet he speaks of them as a great company, a "cloud of witnesses"—witnesses for God and for His truth in their day and generation. And he speaks of them as having obtained a good report through faith—as witnessing to us of the nature of the race, of what we may look for if we would follow the Lord fully, and of what will carry us through; and not only witnessing of these things, but looking on, and sympathizing with us, and thus not only stimulating but encouraging us to follow their footsteps and to run the same blessed race. And how powerfully do they stimulate and encourage, when we consider that there is no case in which the Christian is found to which he will not find a corresponding one among those who through faith and patience now inherit the promises.

But in our text we have what we must call the grand encouragement, as well as the grand direction, and the source of strength—"*Looking unto Jesus.*" Not only is the race-course compassed about by a great cloud of witnesses, but Christ is looking on; His sleepless eye is upon His people; He is watching them with the deepest interest. The success of those who have preceded us in this race notwithstanding the fears with which many of them were oppressed, the difficulties they had to encounter, the fiery trial through which in many cases they were brought, is a powerful motive to patient endurance and to hope against hope; but it is the presence and the unchangeableness of that glorious Object in looking to whom *they* ran and obtained, that can inspire the believer with the hope that he too

shall be enabled to persevere and to overcome. If a great cloud of witnesses encompasses the believer's path, if the eyes of all the glorified spirits are upon him as a conflicting, suffering brother, and if this is a motive to follow their faith and patience, yet it is in looking unto Jesus that the hope is produced of being enabled to follow them. And if to run the race successfully it be necessary that the believer lay aside every weight and his easily besetting sin, it is in looking unto Jesus, and in this way alone, that he is enabled to comply with these requirements.

It is in looking unto Jesus that the race-course is entered upon; looking away from other objects to Him; looking away from the accusations of a guilt-laden conscience, from a fiery law, to Jesus for rest; and looking away from the world to Jesus. It is in obtaining a view of Him as the Lamb slain that the soul is drawn by the invisible, but almighty, chain of His grace and love out of the fearful pit and miry clay; and it is under the joint influence of His authority, His love, and His teaching, that it is brought to say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Faith in Christ is the starting-point of true religion; faith that depends upon Jesus for salvation, that gives the heart to Him saying, "What have I to do any more with idols?" And whatever impressions may be made on the heart with respect to the necessity and all-importance of true religion, and whatever efforts may be made to follow Christ in the path pointed out to His followers, these impressions are not saving, and these efforts are unavailing until the soul complies with the gospel call, and receives Christ as *Jesus*, who "saves his people from their sins." This is a truth of vital importance.

It is in looking to the Lord Jesus that we run the race. He is not only the Alpha and Omega of the sinner's hope

when He first attains to good hope of salvation; but He is the Alpha and Omega of His people's continued hope, the beginning and end of their confidence. He is the believer's Strength and Light, and Guide and Consolation, and Salvation and Glory—his *all*. He is the Sun of Righteousness in his firmament, in whose light alone he can see spiritual objects, or discharge spiritual duty; in whose warmth alone he can taste of true joy. It is on His righteousness that he depends altogether for the acceptance of his person; it is on His grace he depends for the sanctification of his nature. It is His arm that supports him; it is His love that satisfies him. To contemplate Him, indeed, in the unveiled glory of His Divinity, apart from His work as Immanuel, would but dazzle and consume him; but, as He is revealed in the mellowed lustre of His mediatorial work, the contemplation is inexpressibly refreshing to the soul. The poor, dark, guilty sinner can contemplate Him with the deepest humiliation, and yet as the object of his trust and confidence. Humiliation and hope can thus take root and flourish side by side in "looking unto Jesus."

You are to remember, believer, and you are to be animated to greater hope in remembering, that a company which no man can number has trod the same path which you are treading, that you are compassed about by a cloud of witnesses: but you are to look to Jesus. The whole company of the redeemed are but so many mirrors in which some small part of His beauty is to be seen; and even in their glorified state, what can they do for a poor sinner—for a burdened spirit? They can sympathize with him, but that is all. There is but one Object that can meet all his need, that can fill his eyes when capacitated for perceiving and drinking in moral and spiritual beauty, that can fill his heart for ever; and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. The eternal Father is never weary of contemplat-

ing His excellences; the holy angels are never weary of singing His praises; the redeemed will never complain that their constant contemplation of His beauty has brought satiety. Many are the groans of the burdened soul under a sense of distance from Christ, and of dim, dim views of Him; but he will never weary of seeing His face when he comes to the heavenly Zion.

But we must view this subject in another light. A poor, dark, weak creature is called to run the race from sin to holiness, to aspire after nothing less than perfect likeness to God; to seek after nothing less than to glorify God. Very true, he has undergone a glorious change; he has passed from condemnation to a state of acceptance in God's sight; he has been renewed in the spirit of his mind; old things have passed away; the world has been made vanity to him for Christ. And yet he is, in himself, as utterly without strength as he was before. He has no stock of grace on which to trade; he has no inherent might to resist his spiritual enemies; he cannot preserve his own soul, cannot exercise aright any one of the graces of the Spirit, and, whatever may be his advances in the divine life, his condition in this respect remains unchangeable. He is still, while in this world, a sinner needing mercy, as surely as when he first sought and obtained mercy; needing the everlasting strength of the Lord Jesus to sustain him, as surely as when he began the conflict; and the more he advances in the divine life, the more vividly does he realize this, and the more does he shrink from the workings of that evil principle which would conjoin with the finished work of Christ, as a ground of hope, anything of his own, anything even of what the Spirit of God has wrought in him, or that would interfere with his looking to Jesus with the same feeling of strengthlessness in himself as when he first looked and was saved. And yet he

is called to run this race. How then can he run it? He is to run it as he entered it, "looking unto Jesus." As there is One who has done all for him as regards the deliverance of his soul from condemnation, and the beginning of the good work, so He is to continue to do all for him, and to perfect that which concerns him. On Him therefore he is to depend; to Him he is to look, and for all the necessities of the Christian life there is provision in the Lord Jesus. Observe, then, how spiritual sloth on the one hand, and despondency on the other, are shut out by the provision of the gospel. The Lord Jesus seeks no rival to Himself in beginning or in carrying on the work of grace. What He seeks is dependence, simple exclusive dependence on Himself for beginning and for perfecting it; and in this dependence He is glorified.

On the one hand, then, it is the confiding, depending believer that will be the diligent and the active believer; it is he who carries all his wants and burdens to the Lord Jesus to have his wants supplied out of His fulness, who will be engaged with his whole heart in running the race; and, on the other hand, the call to run this race is not like Pharaoh's call to the children of Israel, "Make bricks without straw;" the poor empty believer is not called in the exercise of his own resources to be holy. No: Christ is made of God to His people not only righteousness but sanctification. The doctrine which gives works any place whatever in the justification of the sinner, or which gives the Christian inherent power to carry on the work of sanctification, independently of its being a soul-destroying doctrine, is a miserable and a cheerless one.

Faith then is the great principle of obedience. The obedience of the true Christian is distinguished from the obedience of the formalist in many respects:—it is the obedience of love, love to Christ, and of universal respect

to all Christ's commandments :—but it is specially distinguished in this, that it is the obedience of faith. When we say that it is the obedience of faith, we mean, first, that it is opposed to the obedience prompted by self-righteousness or produced by slavish fear, for it is animated by hope; and secondly, that it is opposed to the obedience that draws on self for its supplies, for it draws its supplies from an unseen Saviour.

I shall not at present dwell upon the nature of faith as set forth under this beautiful emblem or simile, "looking unto Jesus." I do not know that there is in the Word of God an exhibition of faith that is more fitted for the weak believer, more fitted to "help unbelief," than this one. The glorious simplicity that belongs to faith in Christ is brought out by it,—the simplicity that makes it so hard for the self-righteous heart to understand what faith is—that it is the simple looking of a consciously-lost and helpless sinner to the Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel, for that salvation which He died to purchase, which He lives to bestow. Two or three things, however, we must keep in view as necessarily included in it. For example, there must be the knowledge of Christ, some measure of true spiritual knowledge of His person and work. Faith cannot be exercised on an unknown Christ; cannot be exercised except in so far as the understanding, illuminated by the Spirit of God, discerns the glory of Jesus the Christ. And so, for the continued actings of this faith, there is needed growth in the knowledge of Christ. Therefore it is that when the apostle Peter exhorts his brethren to "grow in grace," he adds, as one thing in which in an especial manner growth in grace consists, "and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then, there must be trust in Christ. Now the general call of the gospel affords a warrant at all times to the believer for

a fresh exercise of faith in the Lord Jesus; *e.g.*, such a glorious passage of God's Word as this: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life;" and blessed be God that we are warranted to make this use of the glorious gospel from hour to hour. But in addition to this, there are particular exhibitions of the Redeemer suited to all the conditions or circumstances in which His people are found in this world. Now, "looking unto Jesus" is looking to Him in the exercise of expectation and trust that He will be to us according to His own word, and according to our need; that He will be our Life in our deadness, our Advocate to undertake for us, our Keeper to protect us, our Shepherd to feed us; and so for all our wants.

Then again, this "looking unto Jesus" must be such a looking as implies heart-complacency in the glorious Object of faith. No doubt we are to distinguish between faith and love; we are not to confound these two graces. But we must remember that they are ever inseparable. Faith kindles love, and love stirs up faith to increasing exercise. It is to the look of love, as well as to the look of trust, that the believer is invited.

Now let me notice, ere we come to a close, some of the special characters in which the Lord Jesus is to be contemplated.

Here let us not forget that if our faith be exercised on the Lord Jesus Christ, so that we shall really run the race set before us, it must first realize the glory of His Person. We cannot perceive the preciousness of Christ's work unless we perceive the glory of Christ's Person—God-man, Immanuel. There is no human teaching that can give us one right view of Christ in His person. The Spirit of God can give this. He gives this to His people; He will give it

to us if we ask it of Him. Oh, where there is a "looking unto Jesus," and a running of the race, there is prayer from day to day and hour to hour for the teaching of the Spirit to show us Jesus in the Word in the glory of His Person!

He is to be contemplated as the Lord of the race, whose we are by creation and by redemption; so that each one of His people ought to be able to say, "To me to live is Christ;" and so that they ought to come each day to Him with the question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? what wilt thou have me to part with? what wilt thou have me to suffer in running this race? I am thine." A sense of His authority and of infinite obligation must possess His people if they would follow Him.

Again, he is to be looked unto as the great High Priest, or the propitiation for sin; and as the Advocate with the Father. It is a view of Christ in His priestly office that first attracts the sinner and gives him peace; and a continued view of Christ in His priestly office is necessary for preserving peace in His people. It was as the Lamb of God that He manifested forth on earth the glory of the Father: it is as the Lamb that was slain that He is adored and worshipped in heaven; and while seated there at the Father's right hand, representing the persons of His people, He presents their services too, perfumed with the incense of His own merits. Oh! how soon would the believer faint, give over, and sink into utter despondency, unless he had the great High Priest to look to—and *such* a High Priest who is touched with the feeling of His people's infirmities, and who saveth to the uttermost because He liveth for ever to make intercession.

Again, He is to be looked unto as the Forerunner. He hath gone before His people in this race. And now the very print of His steps is to be seen in the course. It is to be

seen in the doing of the Father's will; this was His meat and drink. It is to be seen in prayer; He spent whole nights, He wrestled and agonized, in prayer. It is to be seen in the deep valley of humiliation: His whole life on earth was spent in it. It is to be seen in temptation; He suffered being tempted. It is to be seen in the dark valley of the shadow of death: He passed through that valley: He has gone before, and now He says to His people, "Follow me." Christ has thus consecrated with the true consecration, He has sanctified and hallowed, every step of the way to glory. There is no enemy with which His people must contend that has not been vanquished by Christ; there is no trial which He has not converted into a blessing. He has taken the sting out of death; and because He lives, His people shall live also.

With this blessed truth we must connect another. He is the Example—"that we should follow his steps." The believer in Jesus is to aim at nothing short of being *like Christ;* and if he aims not at this he cannot follow Christ at all. Oh! are not many of us condemned by this truth? How little is it realized and laid to heart! In seeking to run the race set before us, we should consider how He endured the cross, despising the shame. These are great words—may they sink in our hearts!—"He that saith he abideth in him," that saith he is a follower of Christ, "ought himself also so to walk even as he walked."

In the last place, He is to be contemplated as the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is *the life* of His people; so that their life depends not on what they have received from Him, but on their continued union to Him; and the exercise of this life depends not on any inherent strength of theirs, but on continued communications from the life-giving Head; and so that, if He is to be trusted in as

the Priest, submitted to as the Master, rejoiced in as the Forerunner, and imitated as the Example, it must be through cleaving to Him as the Life, and looking to Him for that very faith which depends upon Him. So true is it that Christ "is all, and in all." It is He who begets this faith, when the sinner cries, "Lord, save me, I perish." It is He who keeps it from fainting in the time of trial, when it says, "Lord, to whom can I go?" It is He who clears its eye when it waxes dim, to see afresh His own beauty in the page of truth. It is He who strengthens its vision to see the land that is very far off. It is He who teaches it to say, "My soul, wait thou with patience upon thy God alone." It is He who nerves it to do and to suffer great things for His name's sake. It is He who will teach it to commit the spirit to Him who has redeemed it, when its race is run. He is then to be looked unto as the Author and Finisher of faith. And, let it be observed, faith is here singled out as comprehending every other grace. He who is the Author and Finisher of faith is the Author and Finisher of every other grace; the source of all life, light, consolation and joy, without whom His people can do nothing.

We must distinguish between the hold that faith takes of Christ and the hold that Christ has of the soul. What is necessary in order to saving faith is a renouncing of every false refuge, and a resting in truth upon Christ for salvation. Now, though this is the production of almighty power, yet, as it exists in the sinner and is matter of his consciousness, this precious grace is often very weak, very feeble, quivering like a leaf; yes, and as he runs the race, it is often so. But then while faith, so to speak, stretches out its weak trembling hands to Christ, Christ has the everlasting arms about it, and holds it secure from wrath and sin and all that can harm it, in a grasp stronger than

death and the grave; and nothing can pluck it out of His hands. He saith, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

And now to close. Dear friends, pray for him who has been addressing you from these blessed words, that it may be given to him through abounding grace so to run as that he shall obtain; not to run uncertainly, not to fight as one that beats the air. It is a solemn truth—woe to us if we overlook or forget it—that there is a running which is unsuccessful, which does not obtain the crown. There is the running of mere profession. There is the running of him who subordinates Christ and the care of the soul to the world in some form or other. There is the running of the self-righteous, who thinks more of his own goodness than of the finished work of Christ. There is the running of the man who trifles with the obligations of God's law; who holds by some darling lust and will not let it go, though God says that "they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." There is the running of the prayerless, the spiritually dead man, who never seeks communion with the unseen Saviour. There is the running of those who have set out well, and have drawn back—some wiled away, some engulfed by the world, some terrified back in the time of sore trial. And there are those who run to the very gate of heaven with the hope of being admitted there—"Lord, Lord, open to us;" to whom Christ will say, "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not." Is it possible that an immortal spirit should go on under this strong delusion to face death and to enter eternity, if he really sat down to examine himself by God's Word, to try his state and to know the case of his soul? Is there one of my hearers who says, "God forbid that I should go on so! What will mere profession avail? What will a name or place in the visible Church avail, if I do not know and

love the Lord; and if Christ Himself be not formed in me the hope of glory?" Remember, if you are Christ's, you will have a struggle to maintain. You must expect a struggle and a contest while here. Seek preparedness for it, and pray for the continued teaching of the Holy Spirit to show you the things of Christ. It is looking unto Jesus that makes the race blessed in all its hardships, temptations, and difficulties. Young Christian! if through grace you have counted the cost, if you *would* follow the Lord fully in the way He has marked out for His people, if you *would* be kept from looking back to Sodom, then we bid you welcome in Christ's name. Be not discouraged. Be not afraid. Christ can keep, support, carry you through, giving you to feel that His "yoke is easy" and His "burden light." And this is what the advanced Christian needs—to have the things of Christ shown him; this is what the aged Christian needs "till the day break and the shadows flee away," when he shall see that head which was crowned with thorns, now with the many crowns.

Once more. How many are there of us (the Lord knoweth) who are still strangers to this race, without the strait gate, in an unconverted and impenitent state? who have never realized that the salvation of the soul is the one thing needful; never been brought to lay to heart that to flee from the wrath to come is a thing which cannot be put off till to-morrow, which requires haste, is pressing, urgent. "Press into the kingdom;" "To-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts." O that the Lord the Spirit would cause His own solemn truth, His own glorious truth, to enter consciences and hearts!—the truth in regard to the race, to eternity, to the blessedness of the saved, the misery of the lost,—the truth in regard to Jesus. O that some wandering eye might

be fixed this day upon the Lamb of God! that some vain mind were fixed, some vain heart brought under the power of the cross of the Lord Jesus! And then never, never, my dear fellow-sinner, would you find rest until that union was made up between you and Christ, which would be manifested by your cleaving to Him in this world, and which would last for ever—for who shall separate His people from His love?

SERMON XXII.

THROUGH THE WILDERNESS TO THE CITY.

"And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation."—Ps. cvii. 7.

It is soothing and delightful to believe that, amidst the wickedness and disorder that prevail in the world, the God of redemption is ever carrying on His own mighty purposes. He has, as He ever has had, and ever will have, a Church on earth whose interest is dear to Him, and for the promotion of whose welfare all the events of His providence are ordered. For her sake our world is preserved; when she is complete, and all her scattered members are gathered in, the purpose of its continued upholding will be accomplished. She is founded upon a rock, on the immoveable basis of Immanuel's merit and power; and therefore against her the gates of hell shall not prevail. The arm that protects and the eye that guides her are indeed unseen; but their influence is not the less felt by her. Nor is she now less protected and guided by God than when the pillar of cloud and of fire preceded her in her journey, pointing out her path and encouraging her to pursue it. There is a covenant to which God ever has respect in all the arrangements of His providence; a covenant which guarantees her continued existence despite of all opposition, and her preservation in the darkest and most cloudy

day; her gradual and slow but sure extension, and her final and triumphant completeness. She is now not less surely *one* than in the days of Moses, and not less surely the object of God's unceasing care in her journey to Canaan. Kings still reign or are dethroned, nations still flourish or fall for her sake; the hearts of all are still in God's hands; His power, and His love, and His purpose are unchanged. Through difficulty, danger, and opposition she is safely conducted, nor will His guidance cease till she become the Church triumphant. She may be in a low and suffering condition; her path may be that of trouble and affliction; but she is ever guided by the right way that leads to the city of habitation. Men speculate wildly on the course of events, unconscious or unwilling to acknowledge that they all tend to one great object—the gathering in of God's scattered family from all nations, and the final triumph of His despised and persecuted Church.

Now, what is thus true of the Church in general is equally true of its members individually. They are the children of the same Father; and numerous and widely separated though they be, His favour and His protection are extended in the same measure to all of them. The poorest and the meanest of the true Israel of God is, in all the varied circumstances of his condition, and in all the chequered scenes of his life, the object of His special regard and His holy guidance. To others he may be an object of pity and contempt, and to himself he may be a wonder at all times, and not seldom the unconscious possessor of such a privilege; yet he is not the less surely its possessor, and not the less unceasingly led forth by the right way to the city of habitation.

In order to arrive at any conception, however faint, of the full meaning of this beautiful passage, we must view it as spoken of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Leader and Com-

mander of His people, the Captain of salvation. It is by His blood the Church is purchased and cleansed. It is He who in His fathomless and eternal love gave Himself as a ransom for her, and it is He who as her Forerunner has entered within the veil and claimed for her, as the reward of His surety-work, the incorruptible inheritance. It is He whose property she is by right, by gift, by purchase, by conquest. It is He who is her elder Brother and her Bridegroom; it is on His shoulders that the government is laid, and it is to Him that all power is given in heaven and on earth, that so He may "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." It is He who has marked out the path in which she must follow Him; it is His Spirit that guides her into it and preserves her in it. It is under the covert of His blood that she is first conducted into it, and that her continued safety is found. It is through His Word and His ordinances that her continued supplies of enlightening and refreshing and sanctifying grace are communicated. In His hands are her times of joy and sorrow, of comfort and trial. It is His arm, the arm that wrought out her salvation, that secures her the victory over the assaults of earth and of hell. And it is clothed with His righteousness and beautified with His salvation, that she is at length to be presented faultless before the presence of His glory, to dwell with Him for ever in the city of habitation.

Let us endeavour, then, in dependence on promised grace, to notice, first, some of the characteristics of this way by which the great Leader of His people conducts them; secondly, let us consider it as the right way; and, thirdly, let us contemplate its glorious termination, the city of habitation to which it leads.

I. The characteristics of the way.

We may view it, in the first place, as *leading through a wilderness.* The Christian's state in this world is one of

pilgrimage. "These all," says the apostle, "confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth."[1] This is not the Christian's rest; *it* remaineth for him. Here he dwells in tents and tabernacles. In his best state he can but contemplate afar off and long for the promised possession. When his faith is most vigorous and his love most ardent, he must still forget the things that are behind, and press forward. When his day is most unclouded, his hope most lively, his joy most abundant, he must still hear the voice addressed to him, "Arise, and go hence." Here is not his portion or his inheritance. The men of this world have their portion in it; *his* inheritance is reserved for him—an incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance; a fitting gift for the Lord of Glory to bestow on His Son's "joint heirs." This is not his home. He is here at a distance from his Father's house, travelling to a far country. It is by faith he walks, and not by sight. His citizenship is in heaven; he is of the household of God. The world is a strange land to him; it acknowledges a Master whom he disowns, and sources of happiness which he renounces as delusive. Its objects of dependence are to him lying refuges. It cannot enter into his feelings; it cannot sympathize with him in his joys or his sorrows, his hopes or his desires, his views or his aims. *It* looks at the things that are seen and temporal; *his* faith looks beyond to those things which are unseen and eternal. It grasps at present shadows; his faith gives substance to hoped-for blessedness. He has no common interest with it; he treads in a different path, and pursues an opposite end. Its end will be destruction, his end will be glory. Nay, this world is as a wilderness to the Christian pilgrim; it is barren of all that can satisfy the desires of his heart, or make him truly blessed. It cannot minister peace to his

[1] Heb. xi. 13.

conscience, balm to his diseased soul, or satisfaction to his longing holy desires. Its peace and its comfort are not for him. Vanity of vanities he sees inscribed on all created objects, and sin and guilt in a surrender of the heart to them. To speak thus of the world, with its gaieties and fascinations, may sound harshly in the ears of its votaries. But the language of Scripture is plain, pointed, and decisive: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." If the Christian's treasure is in heaven, and if his heart is there, then surely we are rash and presumptuous in appropriating the sacred name if our treasure and our heart are in the world. The desire of another and a better country is altogether incompatible with the love of this present evil world.

The cry of "vanity of vanities and vexation of spirit" is indeed not an uncommon one. It is often wrung in the bitterness of disappointed hope from the carnal unsatisfied heart. But until eternity be fixedly contemplated in all its bearings on our happiness and misery, and until a God in Christ be recognised and felt by us as the source of all our blessedness, repeated disappointments will never induce us to give up our vain pursuit of happiness in the creature. Again and again we shall return to it till death and the grave find us still crying out, "Who will show us any good?" We may distrust the world, we may expect but little from it; and yet we may still be as utterly destitute of the spirit of pilgrimage as those who glory in their shame, and openly avow that they care not for the future, and that while they are in the world they will endeavour to enjoy it. We may still despise the pleasant land. The world may still be to us a weary land only because it has disappointed us, and not because, perceiving its vanity, we look forward to another and a better.

But Christ implants the spirit of pilgrimage in those whom He leads forth into the right way; discovering to them the emptiness of the creature, making known to them spiritual wants which the world can never supply, exciting in them desires which no created objects can gratify. Such discoveries come not alone, and such desires do not in vain seek for gratification: if it were so, the Christian would be in this world of all men the most miserable. The most trembling and desponding pilgrim Zionward has in him that blessed hope of eternal life, which, however unconsciously, will continue to animate till it be lost in fruition; a hope, the necessary attendant of holy faith, and having for its object deliverance from the body of sin, perfect restoration to the likeness of God, and His full and everlasting communion; founded not on any internal experience, but on the promises of a faithful God in Christ Jesus. He who has but just entered on his pilgrimage, he in whose heart the spark of grace glows most feebly, has yet desires wrought in him which nothing less than the holy blessedness and communion of heaven can satisfy. It is not indeed at once that the barrenness of this world in all that can worthily fill the mind or the heart is fully perceived by the pilgrim. Christ was the only perfect pilgrim. He alone was truly unspotted from the world. Fully and perfectly to exhibit the character of a pilgrim is not the attainment of the most exalted of His followers. The faith that gives substance to hoped-for blessedness is encountered by unbelief, which represents it as shadowy and unsubstantial; the hope that incites to press forward to its enjoyment is met by chilling despondency and fear; and the holy desire that pants for its full gratification, by deadening, withering carnality. But wherever the spirit of pilgrimage is implanted, there it never wholly dies away. And therefore it is that the Christian is never permitted to settle down

in this world as if it were his home; but despite of the suggestions of unbelief and carnal reason, despite of the proneness of his heart to go after its covetousness, and despite of the ensnaring example and practices of the world, he still feels that he is here in a wilderness-condition. It is a part, and not the least precious part, of his great Leader's conduct and management to correct him when he goes astray, and to remind him painfully and practically that this is not his rest, and that he must not view it as such. It is his privilege to have his heart's dearest idols thrown down, to have his fairest worldly hopes blasted, to have the emptiness of the creature in a thousand different ways discovered to him. It is his privilege to feel an aching void in his heart which this world can never fill, to be kept deeply sensible of wants that created good cannot supply, and to be led by a hard and rugged path as often as his treacherous, idolatrous heart would have him take his ease. He is thus enabled to go up out of the wilderness with his face towards the heavenly Canaan.

But the nature of the Christian journey will appear more fully if we consider his way, secondly, as leading not merely through a strange land, but *through an enemy's country.* The Christian path is one of conflict. Our blessed Lord calls Satan the prince of this world. "The course of this world" is a practical recognition of Satan's daring and rebellious claims of independence and uncontrolled dominion. It is the acknowledging of a rebel who is branded with the curse and visited with the awful indignation of the King of kings and Lord of lords. For the present, it is his fearful eminence to be permitted, in the unsearchable arrangements of God, to claim this world as his own. He works in all the children of disobedience, leading them captive at his will, and holds undisputed sway in their breasts. These know no other conflict than that which

their own unbounded passions excite within them—a conflict between the fear of punishment and the love of sin. But they who are led forth by the right way have a hard battle to fight and to win ere they reach the city of habitation. Their Leader and Commander came to destroy the works of the devil; and, as His followers, they are called to resist, and to hope for victory over, His and their enemy. The prince of this world likes not to have his authority disputed. He places himself in the Christian's path, resolved to resist his advance. He presents himself at will either as an angel of light or in his real character of prince of darkness. He now says, "Take thine ease," and again, "There is a lion in the path." He is not slow to discover or to profit by advantages. The backsliding of the Christian is a feast to his soul, because it brings reproach on God's holy name. He has a host of wicked spirits ready to receive his commands and to obey his will. Yet the conflict would be comparatively light had not Satan other and powerful allies. He has the world—that world that lies in the wicked one, with its broad way that leadeth to destruction, ensnaring and tempting the Christian in every step of his progress to adopt its practices, to yield himself to its pleasures, and forget in them the cares and anxieties of his journey. But he has a more powerful ally still, one without whose aid the Christian would at all times bid him defiance. He has the flesh, indwelling sin, the remains of his own dark image in the soul, which he can contemplate with complacency, with which he can communicate, and with whose help he can forge darts of very fire and malice. With such malicious intentions, and thus supported, he comes forth to the battle against the Christian pilgrim.

But greater is He that is with him than all they that can be against him. If the way to the city of habitation is a

way that must be fought—if the battle must be won ere the crown of righteousness can be given him—he is not sent out to the conflict unprovided for it. It is his honour and his security to fight under the banner of the Captain of Salvation. Because he is on the Lord's side, earth and hell cannot prevail against him. He is furnished from the armoury of heaven with armour of proof, with which to resist and stand, and advance and overcome. Faith is his girdle, righteousness is his breastplate; his feet, in travelling over the rugged way, are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; on his head is the helmet of salvation; in his left hand is the shield of faith; in his right the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Thus armed, he engages in a conflict, deadly, infinitely diversified, and admitting of no truce. This conflict continues to the end of the Christian course. The saint nearest heaven must still as surely fight the good fight as the soldier of yesterday. For the enemy will resist and hold out to the last; he shrinks not from the encounter with the most approved and tried veteran. When the good soldier has all but unbuckled his armour, when the gates of heaven are opened to receive his parting spirit, he will still assail him; nor will his harassing though vain assaults cease till their object is snatched for ever from their influence, and admitted to a kingdom where temptation, conflict, and sorrow are unknown. Not till then will the Christian lay down his armour, to rejoice in the prize.

Thirdly, Let us consider the way by which Christ leads forth His people to the city of habitation as a way *of trial and affliction.*

We have already alluded to one fruitful cause of pain and trial to the Christian: the assaults of his spiritual enemies. The world, with all its growing knowledge and intelligence, still lies in the wicked one, and still hates the

image of the holy unoffending Lamb of God. And he who is a faithful witness, and who is anxious in every situation to approve himself as a follower of the Lord Jesus, and to be kept from the world's pollution, is still the object of its taunts and revilings. The temptations of Satan are a cause of pain to him. There are no doubt some to whom it pleases the Lord to give a more keenly extensive acquaintance with his devices than others; but we may venture the assertion that it would be difficult to find the Christian whose flesh and heart have not at some season or other been ready to faint and fail under his temptations. These are the fiery serpents and scorpions that make the wilderness terrible. The workings of indwelling sin are a cause of grief and sore distress to the Christian. Faintness and exhaustion, a panting of the heart, a failing of the strength, inward wretchedness and groaning in spirit, are produced by them. And it is by a way where such sufferings and distress must be endured that he is led to the city of habitation.

But a second source of pain and distress to the Christian is, the afflictions which he shares in common with the world. Carnal reason would argue, that being so dear to God, and so truly separated from the world, the seal of Divine favour should be impressed upon him in his exemption from the common lot of men, suffering and sorrow. But God's way is not our way, nor are His thoughts our thoughts. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous." "Consider in thine heart," says the man of God to the Israelites, "that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." While the cup of worldly prosperity may overflow with the wicked, the Christian may be emptied from vessel to vessel, and tossed from wave to wave, enduring a great fight of afflictions. Though the measure dispensed to God's people is infinitely varied, yet, as the children of God, all of them are blessed with His paternal chastisement. They cannot go astray without

being corrected, they cannot commit sin without feeling it to be the evil and the bitter thing. They cannot form schemes of worldly aggrandizement or worldly pleasure, that hinder their progress in the Divine life, without having them blasted. They cannot set up idols which displace the jealous God from the throne of their hearts, without having them crumbled into dust.

But a third source of trouble and distress to the Christian remains to be noticed.[1] [It arises from the very exercise of his graces. In this tabernacle he groans, being burdened. The love of holiness makes the workings of corruption grievous. The love of Christ, and a sense of immeasurable obligation to Him, make a dead heart and poor scanty services the occasion of bitter sorrow. The more the work of grace advances in his soul, the finer his spiritual sensibility, and the clearer his views of the excellence of a holy God, the more painfully alive is he to the dishonour done to God by his sins and by the sins of his fellow-men. "Rivers of water run down his eyes because men keep not God's law." And just because he has learned the value of the soul, he has "great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart" for the precious souls around him that are despising the Saviour and walking in the broad way that leadeth to destruction.]

Fourthly, The way by which Christ leads forth His people to the city of habitation is that of *constant and absolute dependence.* The Christian is not brought into the right way, and then left without a guide or protector, to advance in his own strength and confiding in his own resources. He is not girded with heavenly armour, and then sent out to the perilous conflict solitary and unat-

[1] There is a gap in the MS. here, as the leaf which contained the remainder of this paragraph is wanting. The sentences enclosed within brackets, substantially as given in other places by the author, seem not inappropriate here.

tended. He has a Captain and Commander to fight under. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, he must be daily nourished and strengthened from above; and therefore he is taught to say, "I am poor and needy." Such language befits him as surely in his season of confidence and triumph as in that of despondency and dreaded fall; as surely in the last as in the first stage of his journey. His first and his last conquests are won by the help of the same strong hand. His safety and stability depend not on anything he now is, on anything grace has made him, but on his continued union to the Lord Jesus Christ. His growth depends not on anything in the nature of the grace already implanted, separated from continued supplies of grace from his living Head. He may be blessed with the persuasion that his sins are forgiven, and yet in his next approach to the throne of grace he will have anew to plead for pardon. He may be blessed with the persuasion and the experience that he has been washed from his sins in the blood of the Lamb, and yet he must repair for new and continued cleansing from his defilements. The pillar of cloud and of fire was not withdrawn from the Israelites when they entered the wilderness. It preceded them, as the rock followed them, in all their wanderings. The manna did not at once fall in such profusion as to render a further supply unnecessary; or if more than the day's provision was gathered, it became unsound and unwholesome. An ever-pressing sense of need is the Christian's only security; for thus only can he maintain his communion with heaven. Conscious unworthiness, conscious helplessness, conscious dependence for grace to resist sin, to discharge duty, and to endure trial, are his only safe attendants in the right way. And therefore he learns to come daily as empty, to receive out of Christ's inexhaustible fulness.

II. This way—the way of pilgrimage, of conflict, of trial, of dependence—is the *right* way.

It is not indeed the way of the world, and yet it is the right way. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." The way of the world is that of complete and unresisted carnality. It is that of absorption of body, soul, and spirit in those things which are seen and temporal. It is that of carnal ease and repose. It is that of surrender of the whole man to the dominion of sin and of Satan. It is that of forgetfulness of God and of eternity. It is that of insensibility to the soul's exigencies, to its unspeakable need of deliverance from wrath and from sin. It is a broad and an open way, hedged in neither by a supreme regard to the authority of God, nor by a love to His law. It is the way of the "many." They pursue it thoughtlessly and carelessly, walking after the lusts of their flesh, and acknowledging no other guide than the desires of their mind. It is in many cases indeed a hard and a rugged way; sin often brings its punishment along with it; the vanity of the object of pursuit is bitterly felt, vice and wickedness produce bodily suffering and anguish, conscience comes with its sting, the terrors of a judgment-seat and an eternity of wrath rise before them. But it is in many cases—and these are the more dangerous and the more desperate—a smooth and an easy way. No threatening Providences interfere to check the impetuous course. Conscience remains torpid and inactive; and in its silence, if ever they look forward to a future state, they contemplate it without apprehension. Easy and secure, they are brought into desolation as in a moment. From their slippery pre-eminence they are cast down into destruction. Then is it proved that theirs is not the right way, and that the Christian's path does not less surely lead to the city of habita-

tion though it is the path of the few and not of the many, though it be the narrow and not the broad way, though it be the way of pilgrimage and not of rest, of pain and trial and not of ease and security.

But again. It is not the way that carnal reason approves of, and yet it is the right way. *It* would suggest that the Christian, the possessor of such exalted privileges, the heir to such a glorious inheritance, should not be left in so mean and depressed a condition in this world. It perceives not that the glorious kingdom of God is within. It sees not that the wondrous workings of God are exhibited in stamping His own sacred image on a soul that is clothed with a covering of clay. It understands not that a state of pilgrimage, of warfare, and of trial is best fitted for a redeemed sinner and a delivered child of wrath ere his redemption be completed and his rest be obtained, that these may be the more dearly prized and welcomed; and that the infinite love and power of God are more marvellously manifested in His gracious dealings with the Christian in the wilderness, than if he were at once to be translated from Egypt to Canaan. Therefore its reasonings do not make the Christian's way to the city of habitation to be less surely the right way.

Further, it is not always recognised or perceived by the Christian himself to be the right way, and yet it does not the less fully deserve the name. Were not God's purpose one of infinite grace, did it not suppose its object to be unworthy, the frequent murmurings and repinings of His people would provoke Him to desert them. Though provided with heavenly manna, they are often ready to cry out for the flesh-pots of Egypt, and to say that their soul loatheth the provision of God. (It is well that the desires of their carnal impatience are not gratified, and that they are chastened without being consumed.) Instead of gladly

hastening to the discharge of all duty in the strength of promised grace, they sometimes strive to avoid it. Flesh and blood may represent it as unreasonably arduous, and as demanding too large a measure of self-denial, of patience, and of fortitude. The Christian may be called to meet enemies from an encounter with whom his spirit shrinks, because in his folly and in his guilt he has been making a dangerous compromise with them. He may, like the prophet Jonah, be found deliberately scheming to clear the right way of some of its apparent ruggedness, or daringly and presumptuously asking a reason of God for marking out his way in a direction directly opposed to all that *he* judges right, when he should be moving submissively, nay gladly, forward in it. The Christian has at best but an imperfect view afforded him, and a limited experience given him, of the admirable contrivance by which, in all the dealings of God, his advance in the right way is secured. But it does happen, and not seldom, that he regards those very dispensations that work most powerfully for his good as being most against him. God's way is in the sea, and His path in the mighty waters. Visitations in Providence, dark and mysterious, striking at once at the blossom and root of his earthly hopes, come thick upon him, and he cannot always say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." He is but taken out of the furnace to be again sent into it. One fiery trial succeeds another. "All these things are against me," said Jacob. Yet he lived to know that he had spoken unadvisedly with his lips. God's way may be a circuitous way, its blessed termination may be hidden by its windings; but it is still the right way.

Yet again, the Christian is often led forth by this way, when he dares not and will not believe that he is so privileged. He is often brought into it in much fear, and kept in it in much fear, scarcely venturing to whisper to

himself the hope that he shall have his life as a prey. Where others see ground of comfort and joy, he, in his unsparing accusation of self and his perverse ingenuity, sometimes finds matter of discouragement and trembling. And yet is he kept in that way in which "the wayfaring men, though fools, do not err," even "the way of holiness."

Not seldom trodden in darkness and in fear, this is still the right way. For it is God's way. It is the highway cast up by Himself to lead into His glorious presence. It is as impossible for one who walks in it to miss the mark as it is for God to lie or His purpose to be made void. It is a good and a blessed way, even irrespective of its termination. In its most rugged steps it is preferable to the broad way of sin and unfettered carnal enjoyment. There is a blessedness in the hanging of the soul upon God, consciously unworthy and consciously helpless, that the full measure of this world's pleasures can never impart. It is the most fitting way to the city of habitation. We may know some of its excellencies now, and what is not known now shall be known hereafter. The character of Him who has marked it out is a guarantee for its perfect adaptation to its end. It is the way in which a conformity of all His followers to their once suffering and now exalted Head is secured. It is the way, too, in which the sovereign omnipotent grace, and rich forbearance, and unchanging love of God are most marvellously displayed. It is the way in which His judgment of this world is vindicated—"If the righteous scarcely are saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" It is the way to make heaven be felt by the Christian as a gift of grace, and to endear and to make it truly sweet to him. It is after being tossed and buffeted on the ocean that the desired haven is truly prized and welcomed. All who are guided in this way shall at

length acknowledge from experience that "not one word of all God's good promise has failed." We cannot doubt that one of the employments of the glorified saints in heaven will be to contemplate with adoring wonder the arrangements of wisdom and love by which all things were made to work together for their good, by which their temptations and afflictions, the ordering of their place, and lot in the world, the particular providences with which they were visited, the disappointment of their hopes and the frustrating of their plans, were made to subserve their eternal interests.

III. Let us, in the third place, contemplate for a moment the city of habitation to which the right way leads. It is sacred ground; but as the object of the Christian's hope and his promised rest, we should not shrink from approaching it. It is God who has prepared it; He is its Builder and Maker; it is prepared for the entrance of all His people, by the entrance of their Leader and Forerunner.

The most obvious idea suggested by the words, "a city of habitation," is that of rest from pilgrimage and consequent suffering. The desert will have been crossed, and faintness and exhaustion cannot follow them into the Promised Land. The enemy's country will have been left behind them. This world's troubles, its thousand distractions and cares, can no longer reach them. Satan may contemplate afar off their felicity, and fret at it; but he cannot mar it. They shall be delivered from the body of sin and death, and presented before God faultless, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; for their robes shall be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. They shall no longer complain of a hard heart or a blinded mind or grovelling affections, of spiritual barrenness or unworthy services. Fears of hell and of sin shall be for ever dissipated. Their hearts will be relieved of all

their burdens, and every tear shall be wiped from their eyes.

But it will be a rest in God, in His full and intimate communion. They shall be made like Him; His reflected image will be perfect and spotless. They shall be holy, as He is holy. They shall be made worthy to enjoy His direct fellowship; meet to glorify, to praise, and to serve Him. Ordinances shall be no more; they shall see Him as He is. Faith and hope shall be lost in vision and fruition. Here their communion with God is broken; there it shall be unbroken. Here they obtain but an occasional glimpse of the light of His countenance; there it shall ever be lifted up upon them in full and unclouded radiance. But "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what He hath prepared for them."

Finally, This rest and this blessedness shall be enduring and eternal. They shall dwell in God's presence for ever. They shall live and be blessed while God lives. All that constitutes His infinite and unchanging blessedness shall be shared and felt by them as far as their finite natures can admit of it. They shall rejoice with Him, in His being, His greatness, His glory, in the contemplation of His adorable perfections and works. The communications of His love shall flow out to them. Their minds shall be filled with His image, their hearts shall be filled with His love, their tongues shall celebrate His praises to all eternity. Ages shall roll on and find them still engaged in singing the new song, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever." Amen and amen.

Is it, then, to such a rest and such a dwelling-place that the Christian is guided? How calm and submissive should this consideration make him under all his trials and

afflictions! What though the road be rugged, if it leads to Immanuel's happy land! What though weeping should endure for the night, if joy cometh in the morning! What though the burden be heavy, if he does not sink under it!

But is there only *one* way to the city of habitation? Then have we been guided into it? Is there but one gate that opens into it? the strait gate that admits not the worldling, the hypocrite, the formalist, or the whole-hearted, but that flies open to the broken in heart and the contrite in spirit, the self-emptied and self-condemned. Have we entered in by it? Would we be led forth by the right way, with all its humbling experiences? Would we rather be the meanest and the most unworthy of the followers of the Lamb than the most exalted of this world's votaries? Would the hope of deliverance from sin, and of full communion with a holy God, with all the overwhelming glory of its Object, be sweet and transporting beyond description? Or are we still in the broad way, with our backs to heaven and our faces to hell? Then indeed is our case one that claims unfeigned pity and compassion, whatever our external circumstances may be: there is not an expression in the Word of God that can warrant us to believe that we shall be reprieved another day or another hour from the execution of the sentence denounced against us. But the scales are on men's eyes, so that they rush blindfold into the pit that yawns to receive them. They are insensible to guilt and to sin, and therefore Jesus Christ is to them as a root out of a dry ground.

Yet He waits to be gracious. The door of mercy is not shut. You are not yet in the miserable situation of those who cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us," and to whom He replies, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." He is willing and ready to receive you. He is Himself the way to the Father. He

has pardon freely to dispense. He has merit to deliver from the lowest hell. He has treasures of grace, to break asunder like flax the ties that bind you to sin and Satan and this present evil world. If you do not despise and reject Him,—if as lost and undone and hell-deserving sinners you put your eternal interests into His hands, and own Him as all your acceptance, your comfort, your hope, and your blessedness, He will guide your feet into the way of peace, and you, too, shall at length reach His city of habitation.

CONCLUSION.

SERMON XXIII.—CHRIST "ALL, AND IN ALL."[1]

"Where"—or in which thing—"there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."—COL. III. 11.

THE apostle is engaged in exhorting the Colossian Christians to the cultivation of the mind and temper, and the exhibition of the walk which became them if they were risen with Christ. In the immediately preceding context he warns them against lying—against deceit in every form, than which nothing could be more inconsistent with having "put off the old man with his deeds" and having "put on the new man." Then he says, "Where"—or in which thing—"there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."

This is one of those wonderful pregnant sentences introduced primarily to exhibit in a vivid light some great truth, or to enforce in a striking way some exhortation, but, at the same time, full of meaning that reaches far beyond its primary application. To take these words by themselves, "Christ is all, and in all," we may say that the whole system of divine truth and the whole of religion, experimental and practical, is comprehended in them. But what I purpose is,

[1] Sermon before Communion, 21st June 1863.

by the help of God, to bring out three main truths which they must be regarded as teaching in their connection. First, That no outward distinctions are of any avail in the matter of a man's salvation—they are not taken into account by Christ in His dealing with men. Second, It is only Christ that avails. Third, Christ is all—His people have all in Him and abound—for eternity. These truths lead us to speak, first, on what we must cease to have any dependence on; secondly, what we must count all things but loss to win; and thirdly, the exhaustlessfulness that is in Christ, and the unspeakable and eternal blessedness of His people.

I. No outward distinctions are of any avail in the matter of a man's salvation.

"There is neither Greek nor Jew." *Distinctions of nations* are of no moment. The Jew, because descended from Abraham, is not more acceptable to Christ than the Gentile. If he rested in his descent from Abraham, saying, "I have Abraham to my father," he would be only further from the kingdom of God. No doubt in Old Testament times distinctions of nations were in some respects of great account. God was never a respecter of persons, but He was pleased to show special kindness to the seed of Abraham His friend. He separated them to Himself; and among them chiefly He gathered in His redeemed. But with the appearance in the flesh and the death of Christ, the wall of partition was broken down; and now in His Church "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free," for "all are one in Christ Jesus."

"Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision." The *observance or non-observance of ordinances* is of no account in this matter. Circumcision, the token of the covenant and afterwards the outward badge of connection with the

Church of God, behoved, while it continued obligatory, to be observed by those who feared God; but it could never carry a man one step towards saving grace, and, if rested in, it shut him out from salvation. It was always true that "he is not a Jew that is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."[1] And very precious though all God's ordinances are, it is true still that Baptism and the Lord's Supper avail nothing of themselves in this matter. One may have the sign and want the reality; he may want the sign and have the reality.

"Barbarian, Scythian." *Distinctions between the ignorant or unlettered and the civilized or learned* are of no avail. There is an immense difference between the savage or unlettered man, and the man of cultivated mind and great endowments; and that distinction is rightly taken into account in this world in relation to the things of the world. But in the matter of salvation they stand on the same level; yea, "not many wise are called." The wise must come down from his loftiness and be a child, a very fool, if he would enter into the kingdom of God; and all the ignorance, on other points, of the ignorant cannot hinder grace from reaching him.

"Bond nor free." No *distinctions of outward condition* —poverty or riches, low station or greatness, servitude or freedom—are taken into account. The gospel of Christ has not abolished these distinctions. It still recognises those in authority and those in subjection, the rich and the poor, the free man and the Christian slave. The gospel of Christ has not directly abolished slavery; though such is its teaching, that this institution, the reproach of

[1] Rom. ii. 28, 29.

a Christian land, cannot stand before the truth, if the truth concerning the common salvation have free course and be not imprisoned. But the gospel calls on the great to be humbled, and on the bondman to be encouraged; when it says that there is neither "bond nor free." The freeman is the basest of slaves if he serve sin; the slave made free by Christ is an heir of God.

These outward distinctions then are of no avail in the matter of a man's salvation; they are not taken into account by Christ. He makes no difference between one sinner and another. The same gospel is preached to all. Christ is no respecter of persons when He bestows grace on a sinner; He is not moved either by the greatness of the great man or by the abject condition of the mean man to bestow it; neither does He make any difference in the way of receiving sinners; and He will make no difference on the great day (though there may be degrees of glory in the heavenly world). What is true of outward distinctions and observances is true of whatever may be ours in outward place and privilege in the Church. It is true of our dispositions, doings, works, prayers. We must learn to be weaned from all these things, to count them but dung that we may win Christ. Oh, how necessary is this teaching! How simple the truth, and yet how many may there be who have never once faced it, that the great in this world are, in God's sight, on the very same level with the common herd of sinners. On what trifles do men rest their hope of acceptance with God! It is enough for one that he belongs to what he thinks the true Church, enough for a second that he is not as other men are, and enough for a third that he has eaten and drunk in Christ's presence. Now, let us consider—

II. It is only CHRIST that avails. And if it be asked what is meant by the statement that only Christ avails,

the question might be sufficiently answered by saying that Christ is the common and the only Saviour.

This earth and the things of the earth are viewed very differently in heaven from the way in which they are viewed by worldly men. The one view of this world that is taken in heaven is that it is a sinful world, and the theatre of redemption-work. All outward distinctions between men are overlooked, and all the events that excite and stir men's minds are viewed there in their bearing on sin and salvation. Man, created holy and happy, fell, lost God's favour and image, became an idolater, a lover of sin and of a present world, a condemned and miserable creature. And there seemed to be a twofold insurmountable barrier in the way of his restoration :—the law of God could not pass away, the justice of God needed to be satisfied; and such was the state of the sinner that if he could only escape misery, he would never desire to return to the Lord. He needed therefore to be renewed in such a way as that his return, while the effect of Divine power, would be his own free act. Now how could God's mercy be righteously exercised? How could God's righteousness be so displayed in the remission of sins, as that the wisdom, power, and grace of God could be put forth in raising up a new and more wondrous creation on the ruins of the old? If this is in our view a problem easy to be solved, it is because we have never made acquaintance with the righteousness of Him with whom we have to do, and with the evil and demerit of sin. We are told that the "counsel of peace" was "between Them both."[1] The Father, choosing sinners to eternal life, gave them to His Son; and *He* undertook to be their Surety, their Kinsman-Redeemer, to bring them back to God, to save them in a way all-glorifying to God and full of blessedness to them, but

[1] Zech. vi. 13.

involving in it such self-emptying and such humiliation and suffering as pass all knowledge. This, the greatest and most precious thing in the Divine secret, began to be revealed after man's fall, was increasingly unfolded age after age till the fulness of the time came, and the eternal Word was made flesh. The Son of God appeared, adored in heaven, seen as the Wonderful, but "despised and rejected of men." Jesus of Nazareth went about overcoming men's evil with overflowing good, He met and conquered Satan and the world, He fulfilled and magnified God's holy law by an obedience perfect in thought, word, and deed; and He crowned His work by offering Himself up a sacrifice of expiation to God. And this is the chief thing to be seen in His death,—not all His outward sufferings, not even the lamb-like spirit in which He suffered, but that He was "made a curse," that God "laid upon him the iniquities" of His people, and made Him answerable for them. If we overlook this, we make the cross of Christ to be of none effect; for it was thus He became a Saviour.

What light does the death of Christ, thus viewed, cast on our blindness and perverseness, that we can after all rest on circumcision or uncircumcision, on anything but "Jesus Christ and him crucified." Previous to the revelation of this glorious mystery, we can conceive the case of a poor sinner, stung by an accusing conscience, and finding the question, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" insoluble, having confidence in the flesh, and striving to be his own saviour. But with the light cast by the death of Christ on the character and perfections of the great God, that we should still go about to establish our own righteousness, and have any trust at all in ourselves—oh! how blind, how perverse!

We say, then, that the incarnate Son of God thus procured salvation. And, because not only of the complete-

ness, but the infinite value which His divinity gave to His work, He merited that His people should be saved; He acquired a right to put them in possession of the blessings of salvation;—to do this, not in any such way as that these blessings could be enjoyed apart from Himself, but in the way of union to His Person; that, as they had all been represented by Him, and all their sins had been laid on Him, they should be so one with Him as to constitute His fulness; that *in Him* salvation should be enjoyed; nay, that He Himself should be possessed by them as their salvation.

Into the nature of this blessed union, and how it is effected by the Holy Spirit between Christ and the believing sinner, I do not now enter. But I observe that Christ may thus be said to be "all" in the glorious sense of being all in the Father's purpose of mercy—as the Mediator between God and man; as the channel, in his Person and work, through which all grace flows forth; as the beloved Son of the Father, in whom He is well pleased to receive, justify, and bless sinners. If Christ, then, is yours, God the Judge has justified you, the God and Father of Christ is a reconciled God and Father to you.

Therefore, again, Christ is all in the Word. It is the truth concerning Christ that makes it a saving word. It is the relation of any truth to Christ that makes that truth a saving truth. If you have found Christ in the word, if you have known the blessed Bible as the word of Christ, then you have found in it what you need for your soul's salvation. Without this we may "understand all mysteries and all knowledge," and be "nothing."

Again therefore, Christ is "all" in the Holy Spirit's teaching and work. "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."[1] He con-

[1] John xvi. 14.

vinces a sinner of his lost estate and of his need of salvation, and shuts him up to Christ in showing how precious that Saviour must be who receives and can save chief sinners.

And therefore "Christ is all" in the estimation and choice of every believing sinner. He has been seeking rest for his troubled spirit in many ways of vanity—oh! what has he not tried?—till, having spent all and ready to give over, he obtains, through the teaching of the loving Comforter, a glimpse of the sufficiency and the grace of Christ manifested on Calvary; and he proves Him, and finds that He is "able to save to the uttermost." For his guilt, he finds atoning blood; for his unrighteousness, everlasting righteousness; for his strengthlessness to resist sin, almighty grace; for his blindness, eyesalve which restores sight to the soul; for his vileness, bowels of mercy and compassion; for his defencelessness, the care of the Good Shepherd; for his sorrows, the sympathy of the great High Priest; for his waywardness and inconstancy, the love of the unchanging Friend; for his heart, a Portion that will fill it for ever; for his destitution of all good, and his utter unworthiness, a Saviour to be his without money and without price. And now what things were "gain to him," he "counts loss for Christ." He has found the pearl of great price, and sells all that it may be his. To know Christ; to be united to Him—so united to Him, by a union not of man's forming but of the Holy Spirit's forming, as that Christ's merits shall be counted to him, and that Christ shall be in him as the spring and perfecter of the spiritual life—this is the one thing he desires of the Lord.

This therefore is what avails—Christ uniting Himself to the soul by His Spirit—Christ united to the soul by faith, so that in Him it is pardoned, accepted, sanctified, and blessed for eternity.

III. Let us now attempt to speak for a little on the *fulness* that is in Christ, and therefore the unspeakable and eternal blessedness of His redeemed people: "Christ all, and in all." We would not overlook one interesting and important truth which seems to be taught by these words in their connection, namely, that whatever is desirable or to be valued in any outward condition or relation, in mental endowments or in anything earthly, is to be found in solid abiding worth in Christ; and that whatever is wanting in regard to any of these things is more than supplied to the believing sinner, in Him. But this is only a part, and a small part, of the truth—it is the greatness of this word *all* that we are to consider. And it is not said, "Christ all in all," but "Christ all, *and* in all."

Consider then what is needed by a lost sinner in order to his being saved. We cannot think aright of this until it be a matter of experience with us, until we feel our own need. But such experience will help us much, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to estimate the unspeakable greatness of spiritual salvation above all outward deliverances, and to understand the passages of God's Word which declare redemption-work to be far above creation-work, and far above God's work of general providence, as a display of His wisdom, righteousness, and love.

But think now what is necessary in order that a sinner be made truly to realize his state as lost. Think of the change of view in regard to God, to the world, and to himself, that must pass upon him. Think of the quickening of his dead conscience; think of the change from stony insensibility and utter unbelief, to such a vivid view of his exposure to the wrath of God, and such a pungent sense of utter sinfulness in the sight of God as will express itself in the cry from the depths, "God be merci-

ful to me a sinner." Then think of what this awakened sinner needs to give him peace and rest. Think of the great and full forgiveness, the reconciliation to God, the acceptance in the sight of God in such a way as will commend itself to his conscience as sure and safe, the renewal of his corrupt mind, and withal, the supernatural view of mercy and all-saving grace that a sinner needs, discovered in the Person and work of Christ so that his heart shall flow out towards the Saviour as all his salvation and all his desire! Then think of what he needs after having come to Christ; every day, every hour, to be kept, guided, sanctified; while warring with sin and with the devil, to walk heavenwards, to be fitted for heaven. Think of all the varied cases of the individual believer, and then think of all the varied cases of the household of faith.

And think of what a supply of grace would be needed if the multitudes of sinners upon earth that hear the gospel were to come in one company to Jesus for mercy. Think of the expenditure of grace in the salvation of the myriads that have been carried safely to heaven and that are now before the throne. Think of what is needed by the Church of Christ this Sabbath, not only for its preservation, but for its refreshment and blessed edifying. Think of what will be needed in the ages to come in this world when nations shall be born in a day, till the company which no man can number get the victory over sin and death, and be presented before the Father "a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

Now, in reference to all this, "Christ is all, and in all." He saves every sinner that comes to Him, never casting one out: and whom He saves, He saves "to the uttermost." He is "made of God" to His people "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." He is the common Saviour; and yet He saves every one in par-

ticular as though He had no other to care for. And it is not only grace that He bestows, suited to their need, but "abundance of grace." In restoring life He imparts it more abundantly. He more than repairs the loss of the fall. He gives new and more ravishing views of the Divine character; and through union to Himself He brings His people nearer to God in the dignity of sonship, and nearer to one another. From the first visitation of His grace to their souls, onward in life, and onward through eternity, He does for them "exceeding abundantly above all that they ask or think."

And now, if we were to attempt to answer the question, How is it that Christ is thus "all, and in all"? we might refer—though we shall not dwell on them—to two or three passages in this epistle—an epistle peculiarly rich in its exhibition of the Person and work of Christ. It is said in one place, "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell:"[1] in another, "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:"[2] in a third, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."[3] In reference to this glorious theme, I notice, first, that there is what we may call a fulness of *fitness* in the Person of Christ for being all in all. It is because of the union of the divine and human natures in His Person that He is qualified to be the Mediator, to make up the breach between God and man, to obey, suffer, merit, to be the repository of all grace and of all spiritual blessings, to be at once the Keeper and the Friend and the Husband of His people. Again, there is an infinite fulness of *justifying merit* in Christ. The merit of His work is His own, and His Church will give Him the glory of it through eternity; and yet it can be and is counted (as wrought out by Him in the room of His people) to the believing sinner, so that

[1] Col. i. 19. [2] Col. ii. 3. [3] Col. ii. 9.

he is made the righteousness of God in Him. Oh! would God that those who have never contemplated this doctrine of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ—who may possibly dislike it—would God that they had some taste of its consoling power! When the Christian is seeking to serve God with his spirit, and yet in view of the spirituality and holiness of the law has ever to complain that iniquities prevail against him, oh! how blessed to be enabled to say, "The Lord my Righteousness." Again, there is a fulness of *saving power* in Christ which fits Him for being all in all—power to illuminate the dark mind, to subdue sin, to change the heart, to renew and sanctify wholly. And, once more, the fulness of *divine love*, unchanging divine love, and the fulness of *human love*, pure, unselfish, self-consecrating, self-sacrificing love, resides in Christ; and, because of this, he is all-fit to be all in all. In this love of Christ the chief of sinners may rest, as soon as he comes to the Saviour, in the sure persuasion that nothing shall ever separate him from it; and this love is the perennial spring of consolation and joy to the Church above.

Well, therefore, may the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Well may they cease from hewing out broken cisterns that can hold no water, or from trusting in anything for salvation and happiness but Christ alone. Well may they rejoice for what they have in Him—for "all things are theirs"—much more for what He is in Himself. And they do trust in Him, they do love Him, they do glory in Him—though not as they would; for in this world their views of Christ are often greatly bedimmed by sin; at the best they see through a glass darkly. They are compassed with infirmity, warring with corruption; but oh! which of them would exchange the hope which he has from Christ and in Christ, faint though it may be, for a thousand

worlds? which of them will hesitate to give his testimony to the sufficiency, the grace, and the transcendent excellency of Christ? which of them has not some wondrous deliverance to speak of, which only matchless Christ could have effected for his soul in the time of his distress? The full meaning of the words, "Christ is all, and in all," is not known, then, to the saints in this world; they will begin to know it when they have crossed the dark valley, and entered on the joy of their Lord. At the resurrection day, when the redemption of the church will be completed, they will begin to understand the meaning of these words: "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;" and then will it be true of them all, amidst all the varieties in the household of faith, that they are every one like Jesus, and alike filled with the fulness of God.

The subject we have been considering is capable of the utmost variety of application. I now notice only two things. If there were nothing more to attract to the Christian life than that it is a life of growth in the knowledge of the Person, the work, and the love of Christ, how well might we count everything but loss for it! It belongs to the very beginnings of the knowledge of Christ that it brings with it a persuasion that there is an immensity before and beyond to be explored and attained to. May the Lord help those to whom Christ is precious ever to follow on, in the face of darkness and difficulties, to know the Lord.

And oh! if it be so that "Christ is all" in the matter of our salvation—that He is "all" in the word, and "all" in the estimation and experience of His people—then, fellow-sinner! there is "no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." You who have

no thought about God or about Christ, seek Christ this day. Seek Him while you may. Remember that life is uncertain. "For what is your life? It is even a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." And oh! when death comes, and the world leaves you, and you leave the world, where will your soul go to, without Christ? When the great day comes—as it shall come—when the great white throne is erected before which we must all stand, when you are found out of Christ, oh, what will become of you? *Now* you have a day of grace, a blessed Sabbath, a blessed gospel, a blessed Saviour, who stretches out His hands to receive you, and who says, "Come unto Me."

The Lord pour out His own Spirit from on high, that His own truth may be made effectual in drawing souls to Jesus! Amen.

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